SRI International

National Evaluation of Writing Project Professional Development: Year 2 Report

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Contents

Acknowledgments....iii
Chapter 1 Introduction.... 1
Conceptual Framework and Research Questions.... 1
Study Design.... 3
Selecting a Sample.... 4
Overview of the Report.... 5
Chapter 2 Describing the Sample.... 7
Teacher Characteristics and Collaboration Opportunities.... 7
Student Opportunities to Write in Class.... 11
Conclusion.... 28
Chapter 3 Partnership Formation.... 29
Co-design.... 30
Co-resourcing.... 33
Critical Mass of Participating Teachers.... 34
Sufficient Professional Development.... 36
Conclusion.... 37
References.... 39
Appendix A Preliminary Teacher Log Reliability Data
Appendix B Teacher Assignments 2007 Summer Scoring Session and Reliability Data

Exhibits

1. Evaluation Framework 3

2: Data Collection Activities 4

3. Teachers' Primary Assignments 8

4. Teachers' Grade Level Assignments 9

5. Background Characteristics of Teachers 10

6. Index of Teachers' Own Writing in Partnership and Delayed Partnership Schools 11

7. Percent of Teachers Reporting Discussing Writing at Least Monthly During Formal Meetings 12

8. Major Instructional Goals of English/Language Arts Teachers 14

9. Purposes of Writing 15

10. Student Engagement in Writing Processes 16

11. Writing Processes Index 17

12. Time Students Spent Engaged in Different Writing Processes 17

13. Purposes of Student Writing 19

14. Student Engagement in Writing Processes 20

15. Types of Writing Goals for Assignments as Reported by Teachers 23

16. Alignment of Teacher Reported Writing Goals for Assignments with Goals Manifested in Assignment Tasks, Mean 24

17. Alignment of Teacher Reported Writing Goals for Assignments with Goals Manifested in Assignment Tasks, Distribution 25

18. Extent to which Assignments Require Students to Construct Knowledge in the Completion of the Assignment Task, Mean 26

19. Extent to Which Assignments Require Students to Construct Knowledge in the Completion of the Assignment Task, Distribution 27

20: Participants in Partnership Planning 30

21: Engaging Teachers in the Planning Process 31

22: The Role of Literacy Coaches in the Planning Process 31

23: Duration of Plan 32

24: Planned Co-resourcing 33

25: Voluntary Participation in Partnerships 35

26: Teacher Participation Strategy 35

27: Breadth of Anticipated Teacher Participation 36

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The National Writing Project (NWP) is a nationwide network that provides professional development to teachers across all disciplines in elementary, secondary, and higher education. Its mission is to raise student achievement by improving writing instruction and student writing performance in schools. For over thirty years, the NWP has been providing professional development that builds teacher leadership by deepening teacher understanding of writing and writing instruction, connecting teachers in a research-informed community of practice, and providing opportunities and supports for teachers to develop their skills in collaboration with peers—and through this process realize their role as creators of knowledge.

The hallmark event of NWP professional development is the Invitational Summer Institute (ISI). The ISI is a multiple week event offered by local Writing Project sites that provides a selected group of volunteers intensive professional development designed to transform their practice within their classrooms and in their professional communities. Teachers who participate in the ISI have the opportunity to become teacher consultants, who later provide professional development to other teachers. This other professional development provided by Writing Project sites includes "open" programs, which are less intensive than the ISI and do not have entrance requirements; inservice programs for schools and districts; community writing events such as Young Writers' Camps; and other events unique to local sites, like online courses. Cutting across these types of events is "partnership" work. Partnerships are sustained relationships between schools and sites where sites provide professional development with the implicit or explicit goal of improving writing outcomes for all students.

In 2006, SRI International (SRI) was awarded the contract to conduct the national evaluation, focusing on partnership work between sites and schools serving middle grades (i.e., schools of any grade configuration that include seventh and eighth grade). This is the second annual report from that evaluation. We begin the report with a brief review of the conceptual framework, the design, and the sample. Greater detail on the study design and analysis is found in the first annual report (Gallagher, Penuel, Shields & Bosetti, 2008).

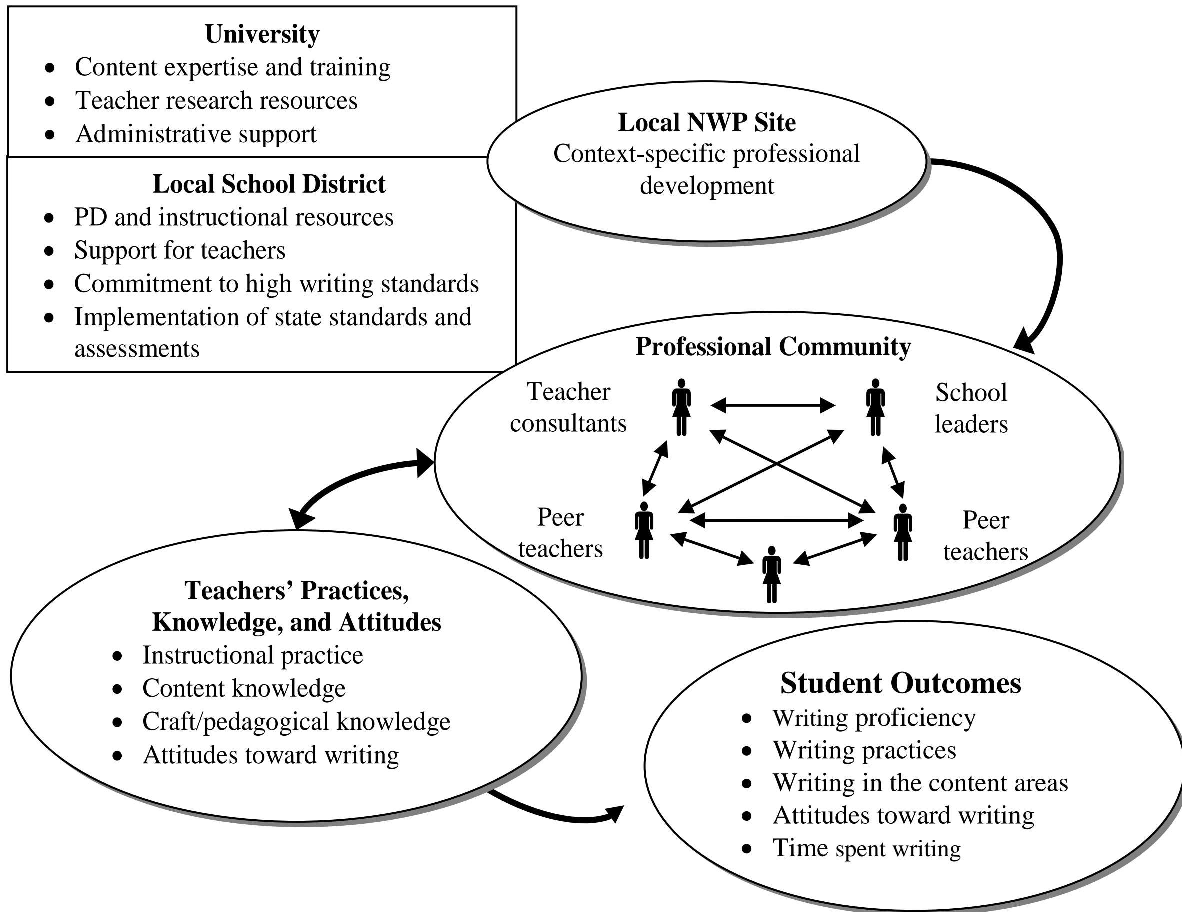
Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

The conceptual framework for SRI's evaluation, portrayed in Exhibit 1, depicts how NWP partnership work is intended to improve student writing. In the center of the partnership work is the teacher professional community. The framework posits that NWP teacher consultants become embedded in the school's professional community, working alongside teachers and school leaders to support changes in teachers' practices, knowledge, and attitudes. Teachers are the co-designers and the implementers of reform. They bring their own expertise to bear, and they participate, along with a "more expert other," the teacher consultant, in a research-informed community of practice. The changes in teachers' knowledge, practice, and attitudes that result from interactions within the professional community in turn are meant to lead to improved student writing outcomes.

The following research questions stem from this framework:

1. Does the **writing performance** of students in classes taught by teachers in NWP partnerships improve to a greater extent than does that of students in a comparison group taught by teachers without NWP training?
2. Do **other student outcomes** related to writing performance (e.g., attitudes toward writing, use of best practices and strategies for writing, amount of independent writing) in classes taught by teachers in NWP partnerships improve to a greater extent than do those of students in a comparison group taught by teachers without NWP training?
3. Do any effects observed in Questions 1 and 2 **increase with time of involvement for teachers** (e.g., as teachers' exposure to NWP participation increases)?
4. Do any effects observed in Questions 1 and 2 **increase over time for students** as they experience repeated exposure to teachers with NWP participation?
5. How are **mediating factors** (e.g., teachers' knowledge, skills, dispositions, and instructional behaviors) affected by participation in NWP partnership activities?
6. How do **changes in mediating factors** identified pursuant to Question 5 above **relate to observed changes in student performance**?
7. What are the **essential dimensions of the professional development** offered through NWP school partnerships, and which of them contribute significantly to teacher change and student learning?
8. How does NWP **participation impact teachers' professional community** and, in turn, **impact teacher and student outcomes**?

Exhibit 1. Evaluation Framework



Study Design

The core of the design is a randomized trial of 39 schools, 20 of which are assigned to the partnership condition and 19 to a "delayed" partnership condition. Power analyses indicated this sample size would be sufficient for detecting an effect size for student writing outcomes that had been found in previous research. However, with such a small sample, randomization does not necessarily produce comparable groups. To increase the chances that the groups were comparable on key contextual factors, we recruited schools in pairs within sites, restricting each site to a maximum of two pairs, and assigning one school in each pair to each condition.

The design called for a four-year evaluation. In the first year, schools in the partnership group would 'plan' the partnership but could not receive professional development. This approach enables baseline comparisons between partnership and delayed partnership groups. For the following three years (2008-09 through 2010-11 school years) sites would implement partnerships with selected schools, while delayed partnership schools would refrain from participating in any professional development in writing not mandated by the state or district. To induce sites and schools to participate, the NWP offered an incentive of $12,000 a year per partnership school to sites in order to subsidize partnership work. Schools selected into the

delayed partnership group receive $8,000 per year and are promised subsidies to support partnership work at the conclusion of the evaluation.

SRI primarily is using six activities to gather data on the local NWP site; school context; teacher professional community; teacher practices, knowledge and attitudes; and student outcomes. All measures are used in both partnership and delayed partnership schools, though interviews are modified slightly based on the condition to which schools are assigned. Exhibit 2 summarizes the data collection activities, including the type of data each activity is meant to collect, the respondents for each activity, and the frequency with which each activity is occurring.

Exhibit 2: Data Collection Activities

Measure	Purpose	Respondents	Frequency
Teacher Survey	School context, teacher professional community, teacher practices and attitudes	All teachers	Annually
Teacher Log	Teacher practices	7th and 8th grade English/language arts teachers	4 weeks/yr (2007-08); 2 weeks/yr (subsequent years)
Teacher Assignments	Teacher practices	7th and 8th grade English/language arts teachers	4 times/year 2007-08, 2009-10
Student Work	Student opportunities to learn, Student outcomes	7th and 8th grade English/language arts teachers' students	2 times/year 2007-08, 2009-10
On-Demand Writing Prompts and Reflections	Student outcomes	7th and 8th grade English/language arts teachers' students	Annually Fall/Spring
Interviews	NWP site; school context; teacher professional community; teacher practices, knowledge and attitudes; and student outcomes	Site directors, TCs, teachers, administrators	Annually Fall/spring

Given the extensive data collection requested from seventh and eighth grade English/language arts teachers, they were offered a stipend of $550 for participation in years when teacher assignments and student work were collected and $400 in other years. Results from the analyses of most data will be reported shortly after it is collected; however, the analysis and reporting on student work will not be released until the Year 3 report. Analysis of on-demand writing prompts will be conducted at the conclusion of the study and will be included in the final report.

Selecting a Sample

In summer 2007, SRI International surveyed local NWP sites across the country to elicit their participation in the recruitment of two to four schools for a randomized trial. Thirty-two local NWP sites obtained formal commitments from 98 schools to participate in the study. To identify NWP sites for inclusion in the sample, SRI sorted the sites into states and then the states into

three regions; the boundaries of the regions were defined so that each region had a similar number of schools. SRI then selected a stratified random sample of sites within regions and then pairs of schools within sites, rotating from region to region to ensure comparable representation from all geographic regions in its initial sample of 40 schools. We then randomly assigned one school in each pair to each experimental condition. In fall 2007, SRI conducted preliminary field work with the selected schools to verify their interest in participating and to confirm that they had "little" or no prior experience with the NWP. (For a full explanation of eligibility criteria and sampling, please see SRI's Year 1 Report.) When we encountered sites or schools that either were not eligible or declined participation, we replaced them in the sample (prior to the collection of any quantitative data). The final sample contained 39 schools, 20 partnership schools and 19 delayed partnership schools. As the Year 1 report described, the selected sites were slightly larger than the average NWP site, but they were not at the top or bottom of the range on several key indicators. Furthermore, partnership and delayed partnership schools appeared comparable based on extant data.

Overview of the Report

The remainder of this report serves two purposes. Chapter 2 describes the sample of participating schools to test whether partnership and delayed partnership groups are equivalent at baseline and to describe key characteristics, including teacher instruction and the resulting opportunities students have to write in school. Chapter 3 describes the planning process that each partnership engaged in from the time they joined the partnership group through the conclusion of the 2007-08 school year. Beginning with summer 2008, partnerships could begin "implementation," i.e., offering professional development. Professional development implementation will be the subject of the Year 3 report.

Chapter 2 Describing the Sample

In the Year 1 report, we showed that schools assigned to partnership and delayed partnership conditions were equivalent, based on externally available data on student characteristics and school performance. During the second, baseline year of the study, we collected information about teacher characteristics and opportunities to collaborate, and students' opportunities to write in class to measure whether schools were comparable with respect to these dimensions prior to the start of partnerships. This chapter describes those data, collected through a survey administered to all teachers in the 39 participating schools and teacher logs and teacher assignments collected from seventh or eighth grade English/language arts teachers in all 39 schools.

Teacher Characteristics and Collaboration Opportunities

We begin describing our sample by reporting on teachers' job assignments (content area and grade-level assignment), their experience in teaching, and their professional preparation for writing instruction. In addition, we discuss two factors especially relevant to the NWP professional development: teachers' own writing practices and the opportunities they have to collaborate. We found that on all of these measures, partnership and delayed partnership schools were comparable at baseline. Additionally, for measures of teacher writing professional development and their own writing instruction, both of which might be influenced by partnership work in coming years, teachers reported baseline levels far below a ceiling on our measures. The low baseline levels indicate opportunity for improvement that our measures are likely to be sensitive enough to document.

Teachers' Primary Assignment

Of the faculty members who completed surveys, one quarter were English/language arts teachers (see Exhibit 3). The next largest group was mathematics teachers, accounting for approximately one-fifth of teachers in the sample. Science and social studies teachers made up just over one-tenth of the sample. Nearly a third of all teachers had some other assignment; this category included teachers of music and foreign languages, resource teachers, and administrators (other than principals, who did not complete surveys).

Exhibit 3. Teachers' Primary Assignments

	Partnership Schools	Delayed Partnership Schools	Overall
English/language arts	25% (*n* = 187)	27% (*n* = 177)	26% (*n* = 364)
Mathematics	21% (*n* = 159)	20% (*n* = 129)	21% (*n* = 288)
Science	12% (*n* = 86)	12% (*n* = 78)	12% (*n* = 164)
Social Studies	12% (*n* = 87)	11% (*n* = 72)	11% (*n* = 159)
Multi-subject	0.3% (*n* = 2)	0.6% (*n* = 4)	0.4% (*n* = 6)
Other assignment	30% (*n* = 187)	30% (*n* = 195)	30% (*n* = 422)

Source: Teacher Survey Question 18

Teachers' Grade Level Assignments

Although the evaluation focused on the middle grades, many schools in the study include elementary and high school grades as well. Exhibit 4 shows the distribution of teachers' assignments by grade. In interpreting the data, it is important to note that many teachers, especially in smaller schools, often teach multiple grade levels. Roughly half of the teachers who completed surveys teach seventh and/or eighth grade and 39 percent teach sixth grade. Teachers of high school grades are more heavily represented in our sample than teachers in elementary grades. The distribution reflects the grade arrangements of participating schools of which the majority are middle schools, three are secondary schools (grades 7 through 12), and four serve students in grades K-12. The distribution of assignments by grade was similar for partnership and delayed partnership schools.

Exhibit 4. Teachers' Grade Level Assignments

	Partnership Schools	Delayed Partnership Schools	Overall
K	1.8% (n = 16)	1.4% (n = 11)	1.6% (n = 27)
1st	1.7% (n = 13)	1.5% (n = 20)	1.6% (n = 26)
2nd	1.8% (n = 17)	1.2% (n = 8)	1.5% (n = 22)
3rd	2.0% (n = 15)	1.3% (n = 9)	1.7% (n = 24)
4th	2.1% (n = 35)	2.8% (n = 19)	2.4% (n = 35)
5th	2.9% (n = 22)	8.9% (n = 60)	5.7% (n = 82)
6th	37% (n = 281)	42% (n = 279)	39% (n = 560)
7th	49% (n = 375)	53% (n = 358)	51% (n = 733)
8th	49% (n = 378)	53% (n = 358)	51% (n = 738)
9th	15% (n = 113)	11% (n = 73)	13% (n = 186)
10th	16% (n = 121)	9.4% (n = 63)	13% (n = 184)
11th	15% (n = 115)	7% (n = 48)	11% (n = 163)
12th	15% (n = 117)	6.7% (n = 45)	11% (n = 162)

Source: Teacher Survey Question 29

Background Characteristics

Exhibit 5 presents descriptive statistics about the background characteristics of teachers that completed surveys. On average, teachers had significant teaching experience, with 13 years of teaching experience overall and nearly 7 years in the same subject area. Almost half of the teachers had earned their Master's degree. In terms of preparation for writing instruction, more than half of teachers reported taking at least one course focused on writing, while slightly fewer than half took at least one course on writing instruction. Almost two-thirds of respondents participated in inservice activities on writing instruction. In interpreting these data, it is important to note that the majority of respondents do not have English/Language Arts as a primary teaching assignment. On all measures described in Table 4, teacher experience, teacher education, preservice educational experiences focused on writing, and inservice educational experiences focused on writing, teachers in partnership schools were similar to those in delayed partnership schools.

Exhibit 5. Background Characteristics of Teachers

	Partnership Schools	Delayed Partnership Schools	Overall
Experience			
Mean Years Teaching	13.28 (9.82)	13.06 (10.00)	13.18 (9.90)
Mean Years Teaching Same Assignment	7.33 (7.06)	6.42 (6.60)	6.91 (6.87)
Highest Academic Degree			
Percent with Bachelor's	43 (*n* = 362)	45 (*n* = 333)	44 (*n* = 692)
Percent with Master's	51 (*n* = 431)	47 (*n* = 342)	49 (*n* = 773)
Percent with Education Specialist's	4 (*n* = 35)	4 (*n* = 31)	4 (*n* = 66)
Percent with Doctorate	1 (*n* = 8)	0.2 (*n* = 2)	0.6 (*n* = 10)
Preservice Preparation in Writing			
Percent who took a college (or graduate) English course targeting own writing	56 (*n* = 466)	54 (*n* = 393)	55 (*n* = 859)
Percent who took an elementary or secondary education course that addressed writing instruction	44 (*n* = 355)	45 (*n* = 315)	44 (*n* = 670)
Percent who took a college (or graduate) course in literacy/English language arts that included writing	44 (*n* = 360)	44 (*n* = 312)	44 (*n* = 672)
Inservice Preparation for Writing Instruction			
Percent who have participated in professional development aimed at improving writing instruction	61 (*n* = 496)	63 (*n* = 448)	62 (*n* = 944)
Hours spent in writing professional development, 2007-08	4.68 (10.14)	4.15 (8.34)	4.43 (9.35)
Hours spent in writing professional development, 2007-08 for teachers of language arts	9.96 (13.85)	7.02 (9.22)	8.5 (11.9)

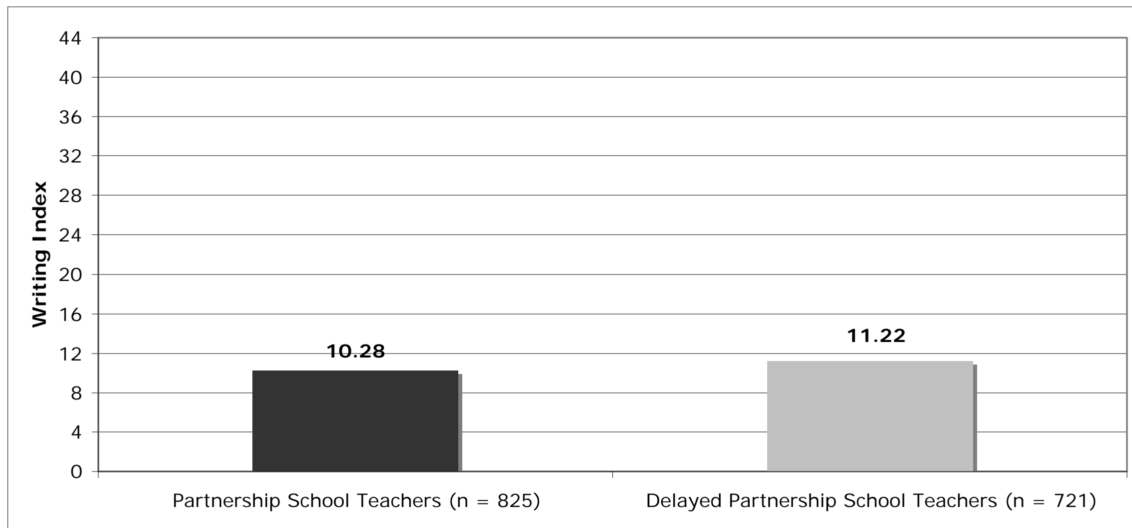
Source: Teacher Survey Questions 5, 32, 33, and 34

Teachers' Own Writing Practices

A major goal of NWP professional development is to engage teachers in writing (Lieberman & Wood, 2002). As part of the teacher survey, we constructed an11-item scale ($\alpha = 0.81$) to measure how much writing teachers did themselves. We asked about the frequency with which

teachers engaged in different forms of writing (e.g., journaling, e-mailing), shared their writing with peers, and sought to publish their writing. We then created an index (scale: 0 to 44) to characterize teachers' overall level of writing where a 0 on items indicated that a teacher said they had not engaged in the activity at all in the past month and a 4 indicated they had engaged in the activity 10 or more times in the past month. As Exhibit 6 below shows, the level of writing among partnership school teachers was similar to the level among delayed partnership school teachers.

Exhibit 6. Index of Teachers' Own Writing in Partnership and Delayed Partnership Schools



Scale: 0 to 44
Source: Teacher Survey Question 17 (Items a-k)

Teachers' Formal Opportunities to Collaborate on Writing

Schools are characterized by a scarcity of time, especially for teacher collaboration (Johnson, 1990; Sizer, 1984). Giving teachers time to meet during a regular part of the workday addresses this barrier directly and provides the conditions for coordinated efforts to scale reforms (Elmore, 1996). As a result, we examined the extent to which regularly scheduled teacher collaboration time, such as team meetings, included a focus on writing. Schools provide some time for collaboration during inservice days. Although these can provide more extended opportunities for teachers to gain exposure to new ideas or work together, we have focused on regularly scheduled formal opportunities for teachers to collaborate because they provide opportunities for decision-making and shared sense-making as curriculum is enacted over time. Recent research suggests that these formal opportunities provide more chances for deep discussion congruent with goals for instructional improvement (Coburn & Russell, 2008).

Among teachers who taught writing to students, writing was a focus of their grade-level teams at least monthly for about one-third of all teachers. Approximately one third of teachers talked about lessons or activities to teach writing at least monthly in these meetings, and one in five said they shared samples of student writing and or discussed feedback to students on their writing. As Exhibit 7 shows, writing was less of a focus in cross-grade meetings, but the pattern was similar with respect to what teachers were most likely to use to anchor these discussions. This finding is not surprising, since cross-grade teams tend to serve different functions from grade-level teams.

Additionally, our data represent an average across all of the subject areas' cross-grade meetings. There were no statistically significant differences between partnership and delayed partnership schools with respect to frequency of meetings.

Exhibit 7. Percent of Teachers Reporting Discussing Writing at Least Monthly During Formal Meetings

	Grade-Level Meetings			Cross-Grade Meetings		
	Partnership Schools	Delayed Partnership Schools	Overall	Partnership Schools	Delayed Partnership Schools	Overall
Lessons or activities to teach writing	32	39	35	22	25	24
Samples of Student Writing	16	22	19	12	14	13
Feedback to students on writing	21	23	22	13	16	15

Source: Teacher Survey Questions 14 and 16

Student Opportunities to Write in Class

The final analyses comparing partnership and delayed partnership schools at baseline focused on student opportunities to write in class. We gathered quantitative data on student opportunities to write in class from four sources: teacher logs, teacher surveys, naturally occurring teacher assignments, and student work associated with those assignments.[1] Site visits provided another source of data on selected student opportunities to write in class, but not in a way that allows for quantitative comparisons across schools and study conditions. This section focuses on baseline year findings from quantitative analyses of the teacher logs, teacher surveys, and teacher assignments. The first goal of these analyses is to describe baseline levels of student opportunities to write in order to establish that there is "room to grow" for those students in schools assigned to the partnership condition. If all schools had reported engaging students in extensive opportunities to write early in the study by our log measures, the log measures would not be sensitive enough to the potential effects of an intervention. A second goal is to establish whether there was baseline equivalence with respect to opportunities to write between partnership and delayed partnership schools. Random assignment ideally produces such equivalence, but it may not always do so, and it is important for investigators to verify that for important measures of impact, treatment and control conditions are equivalent at baseline.

Evidence from the Teacher Logs of Student Opportunities to Learn

We asked each English/language arts teacher in the study to provide us with data on student opportunities to write from 20 different class periods across their school year. For this purpose, we created logs for teachers to complete for five consecutive days of English/language arts

[1] Analyses of baseline data on student work will be presented in the Year 3 report.

instruction, four times during the school year. We asked teachers to indicate their goals for the instruction for each day we assigned them to fill out a log. To complete the log, we then asked teachers to focus on a target student and respond to a set of questions about:

- How much text the target student produced or revised
- The audience for the student's writing
- Whether the student collaborated with any other students on a writing assignment
- The purposes for which the student wrote
- Feedback the student received from the teacher or from peers on her or his writing
- Student opportunities to reflect on writing
- Time spent engaged in different aspects of the writing process
- Opportunities the student had to encounter models of writing

We had a high overall response rate for log data with little variation by condition. The overall response rate for teacher logs based on teachers who submitted at least one teacher log was 92% (91% for partnership teachers and 92% for delayed partnership teachers). The response rates based on the total number of teacher log days expected (4 weekly logs with 5 days of data for each week) was also high but slightly lower than rates for teachers submitting at least some log data. Overall, teachers submitted logs for 82% of expected logs days (82% for partnership teachers and 83% for delayed partnership teachers). Preliminary data on the reliability of log data from a small sample of classrooms appears in Appendix A.

Goals for writing relative to other goals in English/language arts classes. English/language arts teachers are typically responsible for covering a range of literacy and communication standards. We asked teachers to identify the "major" goals of their instruction each day. Teachers reported having, on average, two to three major goals each day. Improving writing skills was a major goal for instruction on over half of the days we collected log data, and it was the top goal overall for English/language arts teachers who completed logs (see Exhibit 8). Teachers also cited as major goals developing skills in responding to literature and developing reading comprehension skills. Relative to other goals, teachers gave less emphasis to developing speaking, listening, and oral presentation skills and to developing research skills. There were no statistically significant differences between the partnership and delayed partnership schools with respect to goals for English/language arts instruction, including emphasis on writing goals.

Exhibit 8. Major Instructional Goals of English/Language Arts Teachers

	Percent of Days in Partnership Schools (*n* = 1,465 days)	Percent of Days in Delayed Partnership Schools (*n* = 1,290 days)	Percent of Days Overall (*n* = 2,755 days)
Improving writing skills	52	54	53
Developing skills in responding to literature	42	41	42
Developing reading comprehension skills	41	37	39
Improving skills in grammar, usage, punctuation, or spelling	28	36	32
Building vocabulary	26	28	27
Preparing students for a standardized test	26	19	23
Assessing knowledge or skills	18	16	17
Developing speaking, listening, or oral presentation skills	13	17	15
Developing research skills	10	8	9

Source: Teacher Log Question 2

Genres of writing. Learning different genres of writing is a goal in many states' and districts' standards, and researchers argue that it is essential to developing writing skills (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Martin, 1989). Identifying genres through logs is challenging, since it is difficult to anticipate the many forms writing may take in class. At the same time, some scholars argue that one can best define genre in terms of the social purpose and function of writing (Miller, 1984). We therefore asked about purposes of writing in order to identify how teachers used different genres to provide their students with opportunities to plan, compose, and revise written texts. In addition to teaching specific genres, teachers had other concerns, including preparing students for tests of writing skills and improving the mechanics of writing.

Exhibit 9 shows that when writing was a focus, the most common purpose was not to gain practice with any genre in particular, but to help students improve the mechanics of their writing. In one third of classrooms, writing for explanation and writing to reflect on an experience or topic were purposes for which teachers had students write. Gaining practice with different genres was an explicit focus in approximately one quarter of the days logs were completed. The least common genres in which students had opportunities to develop their writing skills were persuasive writing and narrative writing. There were no statistically significant differences between partnership and delayed partnership schools with respect to the purposes for which teachers had students write.

Exhibit 9. Purposes of Writing (for days when writing was a focus)

	Percent of Days in Partnership Schools (*n* = 1,465 days)	Percent of Days in Delayed Partnership Schools (*n* = 1,290 days)	Percent of Days Overall (*n* = 2,755 days)
To gain practice with writing mechanics within students' own writing	32	34	33
To explain or analyze a concept, process, or relationship	31	30	31
To reflect on an experience or topic	29	22	26
To gain practice with particular kinds of writing	22	27	25
To monitor or keep track of learning	26	20	23
To express himself or herself creatively	21	25	23
To describe a thing, place, or procedure	23	21	22
To gain practice with forms of writing encountered on standardized tests	24	20	22
To make an argument intended to persuade others	14	20	17
To recount a story or event through narrative	17	14	16

Source: Teacher Log Question 6

Student engagement with writing processes. A focus of many local Writing Project sites is on providing students with opportunities to engage in many different writing processes. Elements of the writing process include planning, composing, editing, and revising text, as well as sharing and receiving feedback on writing. Some empirical support exists for the effectiveness of engaging students in these processes as a means to improving writing skills (Graham & Perin, 2007; Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2006).

In just under one quarter of all days of instruction captured by the teacher logs, students had the opportunity to share or present their writing or to develop extended written texts (see Exhibit 10). In one fifth of the logged days, students engaged in some form of reflection, either on their own writing or on models of writing provided by their teacher. Students less frequently wrote for an audience outside their class, created group products, and reviewed written feedback from their teacher on their writing. There were no statistically significant differences between partnership schools and delayed partnership schools with respect to most student opportunities to engage in

different aspects of the writing process. Feedback through conferencing with the teacher occurred significantly less frequently in partnership schools compared to delayed partnership schools (β = -0.54, SE = 0.26, p = .04).

Exhibit 10. Student Engagement in Writing Processes

	Percent of Days in Partnership Schools (n = 1,465 days)	Percent of Days in Delayed Partnership Schools (n = 1,290 days)	Percent of Days Overall (n = 2,755 days)
Student shared or presented writing to peers	24	23	24
Student planned, composed, edited or revised multiple connected paragraphs	22	25	23
Student reflected on or evaluated his or her own writing	20	23	22
Student analyzed what makes particular texts good or poor models of writing	22	20	21
Student met individually with the teacher to get feedback	15	22	18
Student used models of writing to plan or compose a text	17	18	18
Student received help or feedback on individual writing tasks	14	18	16
Audience for student's writing was someone outside the classroom	12	12	12
Student worked on a group writing product	10	9	10
Student reviewed written feedback on writing from the teacher	8	10	9

Source: Teacher Log Questions 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10

We created an index comprised of the items in Exhibit 10. We plan to use the index as one measure to estimate the impact of the NWP professional development on students' opportunities to learn. For each log, we took a sum of the number of writing processes in which students engaged that day. Exhibit 11 shows the average of the sums across logs, by condition.

Differences between partnership and delayed partnership schools were not statistically significant, and the overall means for both groups fell low on the scale. Students on average engaged with 1.3 writing processes out of a possible 7.

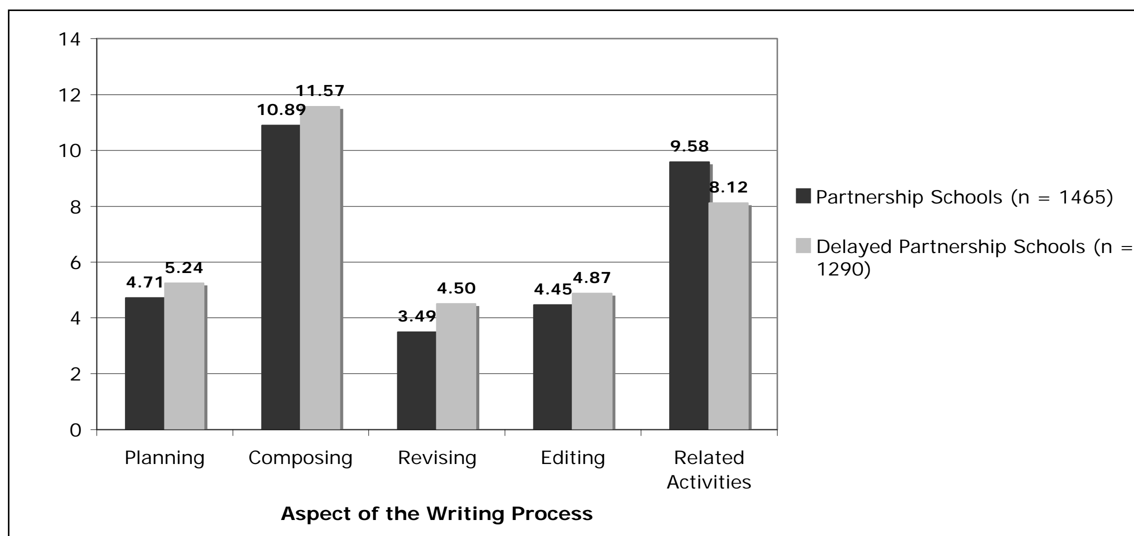
Exhibit 11. Writing Processes Index

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Partnership (*n* = 1,465)	1.28	1.36
Delayed Partnership (*n* = 1,290)	1.31	1.37
Overall (*n* = 2,737)	1.30	1.36

Scale = 0-7
Source: Teacher Log Questions 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9

Time students spent engaged in particular writing processes. Another way to look at student opportunities to learn about writing is to examine the relative amount of time students spent engaged in different writing processes. As Exhibit 12 depicts, students spent the most time engaged in composing written products, on average. Students spent an average of between 4 and 5 minutes composing or editing text; students spent the least amount of time engaged in revising text. There were no statistically significant differences between partnership and delayed partnership schools with respect to how much time students spent engaged in any particular writing process.

Exhibit 12. Time Students Spent Engaged in Different Writing Processes



Note: Average includes all days of instruction, whether or not writing was a major goal
Source: Teacher Log Question 9

Evidence from the Teacher Surveys of Student Opportunities to Learn

We asked all faculty members in schools to complete a survey in spring 2008. All faculty members with teaching assignments, whether in English/language arts or any other subject

matter, answered questions about the purposes for which they had students write and the nature of student opportunities to write during the school year. Unlike the teacher logs, in responding to questions teachers were asked to consider their teaching for the whole school year (2007-08) to date, not just that day's instruction. At the same time, the questions posed on the survey paralleled those that English/language arts teachers answered for the logs, allowing us to compare data from these two sources for teachers who provided both survey and log data.

We had a high overall response rate for survey data, but response rates did vary by condition. The overall response rate for teacher surveys was 91%, with higher response rates for teachers in delayed partnership schools (96%) relative to teachers in partnership schools (88%). This difference is statistically significant at a 95% confidence level. Response rates for seventh and eighth grade English/language arts teachers was 94% (92% for partnership teachers and 96% for delayed partnership schools teachers).

By having all faculty members complete a survey, the survey data allows for comparison of English/language arts teachers and teachers in other subjects with respect to their writing instruction. Because we have detailed information on each teacher's job assignment, we can break down these data by subject area. The ability to do so may be particularly important in subsequent years of the study, as partnerships may develop strongly in certain departments but not in others. For purposes of describing our sample at baseline, we focus only on comparisons between English/language arts teachers and all other teachers, including whether there are baseline differences between partnership and delayed partnership schools with respect to any of these indicators of the purposes, nature, and amount of writing instruction. As with the teacher log analysis, it is important to establish baseline equivalence and to ensure the levels of writing are not so high that an intervention cannot show much impact on these measures.

Genres of writing. As with the teacher logs, we sought to gather information about genres of student writing by focusing on the purposes for which teachers had students write. There were some differences between English/language arts teachers and other classroom teachers with respect to purposes of writing (see Exhibit 13). At the same time, across all classrooms, using writing as a means to monitor or keep track of learning (beyond note-taking) was the most common purpose for which teachers had students write. English/language arts teachers have more emphasis on nearly every other form of writing than did other classroom teachers, with the exception of explanation of concepts or ideas. Explanation is key to the disciplines of history, social studies, and science, which may help explain why this form of writing was so common. However, there were no statistically significant differences with respect to purposes of writing among English/language arts teachers or among other classroom teachers between partnership and delayed partnership schools.

Exhibit 13. Purposes of Student Writing
(Percent Reporting Having Students Do Weekly or Daily)

	English/language arts Teachers			Other Classroom Teachers		
	Partnership	Delayed Partnership	Overall	Partnership	Delayed Partnership	Overall
To monitor or keep track of learning	57	55	56	33	25	29
To gain practice with writing mechanics within students' own writing	54	57	56	14	10	11
To reflect on an experience or topic	54	56	55	26	20	23
To express himself or herself creatively	29	39	35	9	7	8
To gain practice with forms of writing encountered on standardized tests	36	33	34	11	10	11
To gain practice with particular kinds of writing	28	27	28	5	5	5
To recount a story or event through narrative	25	26	26	7	6	6
To describe a thing, place, or procedure	26	27	26	23	21	22
To explain or analyze a concept, process, or relationship	26	26	26	32	27	29
To make an argument intended to persuade others	10	14	12	8	5	6

Source: Teacher Survey Question 25

Student engagement with writing processes. There were differences between English/language arts teachers and other teachers with respect to student engagement in writing processes (see Exhibit 14). English/language arts teachers engaged students in each of the processes much more frequently than did their counterparts in other subjects. There was only one significant difference between the partnership schools and delayed partnership schools with respect to engagement in a

writing process: English/language arts teachers provided feedback through conferencing less often in partnership schools than in delayed partnership schools (β = -0.28, SE = 0.17, p = .08).

Exhibit 14. Student Engagement in Writing Processes (Percent Reporting Having Students Do Weekly or Daily)

	English/Language Arts Teachers			Other Classroom Teachers		
	Partnership	Delayed Partnership	Overall	Partnership	Delayed Partnership	Overall
Composing text	63	60	62	18	17	18
Editing text (focused on grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling)	57	61	59	15	13	14
Brainstorming or organizing ideas for writing text	55	46	51	18	14	16
Revising text (focused on meaning and ideas)	49	47	48	12	10	11
Reviewing written feedback	30	30	30	10	9	10
Reflecting on or evaluating their own writing	28	28	28	8	8	8
Meeting individually with the teacher to get oral feedback or discuss improving writing	22	33	27	8	6	7
Sharing or presenting their own writing to peers	24	27	25	8	7	8
Analyzing what makes particular texts good or poor models of writing	25	22	24	5	5	5

Source: Teacher Survey Question 27

Evidence from Teacher Assignments of Student Opportunities to Learn

During the course of the school year, we collected teacher assignments from all seventh and eighth grade English/language arts teachers in the study.[2] Teacher assignments provide us with a lens into how teachers organize opportunities for students to learn how to write. We and other scholars have used teacher assignments to study student opportunity to learn in English/language arts and mathematics (Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdez, & Garnier, 2002; Mitchell, Murphy, Jolliffe, Leinwand, & Hafter, 2004; Newmann, Lopez, & Bryk, 1998). We asked each teacher to collect and submit assignments that represented their "best opportunity to teach and assess student writing skills" in each grading period. We used rubrics developed by the study team to code assignments for the different types of intended writing goals reported by the teacher (i.e., rhetorical decisions, structure, conventions, or process), the extent to which those goals were aligned with the goals manifested in the assignment task, and the extent to which students were provided with opportunities to construct knowledge in their response to the assignment. Details about the teacher assignment collection and scoring process are described in Appendix B.

During the 2007-2008 school year we collected a total of 554 assignments from 167 seventh and eighth grade English/language arts teachers in both partnership and delayed partnership schools for an average of slightly more than 3 assignments per teacher. Response rates varied by condition: Approximately 89% of eligible teachers submitted at least one assignment in partnership schools (79 of 90 teachers) compared with 94% of teachers in delayed partnership schools. Response rates at the assignment level were similar across conditions. Teachers in partnership schools submitted 82% of the total number of assignments expected while teachers in the delayed partnership schools submitted 84% of the total number of expected assignments.

Consistent with our request for teachers to send us their "best opportunity" assignments each grading period, teachers indicated that over 60% of the assignments submitted were of a type that they assigned once a grading period (33%) or once a year (27%). Teachers in partnership schools were more likely to submit assignments they indicated they gave "once a year," compared with teachers in delayed partnership schools (31% to 23%). Teachers in delayed partnership schools were more likely to submit assignments of a type they typically assign once a grading period than were teachers in partnership schools (40% to 26%).

Teachers' submitted assignments came from a variety of sources.[3] More than two-thirds of all assignments were developed by the teachers themselves (71% overall), with teachers in delayed partnership schools more likely to report that they created the assignment that was submitted (75%) compared with teachers in the partnership schools (66%). The next most frequent source for assignments reported by teachers were the teachers' colleagues (22%), with partnership teachers more likely to report that a colleague was the source of the submitted assignment (25%) compared with teachers in delayed partnership schools (20%). Professional development workshops were the source of only 11% of all assignments submitted with partnership teachers more likely to report this as a source for an assignment (10%) compared with the delayed partnership teachers (3%).

[2] We also collected a sample of student work associated with each assignment. Only the results for the teacher assignments will be included in this report. Results associated with the student work collection will appear in next year's annual report.

[3] Teachers could report more than one source for an assignment.

Writing goals for assignments. The types of opportunities students have to develop and learn writing skills and concepts through assignments are indicated by the specific writing goals teachers have for each assignment. Teachers completed cover sheets with each assignment in which they described the skills, concepts, and content knowledge they hoped students would learn in completing the assignment. Scorers then categorized teachers' descriptions of goals with respect to how much attention teachers gave in assignments to articulating rhetorical purposes and decisions, to structure, to conventions, and to writing processes. Exhibit 15 shows how learning goals were distributed across assignments and between conditions.[4] A clear majority of the assignments (60%) involved issues of structure (e.g., organization, plot structure, topic sentences, and transitions) with delayed partnership teachers significantly more likely to report this as a goal for an assignment submitted compared with partnership teachers (65% to 55%). Process and rhetorical decisions (e.g., argument, theme, point of view, purpose, imagery, and word choice) were the next most frequent goals cited (45% and 48% respectively). Among process goals, planning (15%) and editing (10%) were cited the most frequently and reflection was cited the least (0.7%). Writing goals related to conventions (e.g., mechanics, spelling, run-ons, and punctuation) were the least frequently reported by teachers for the sample of assignments collected (26%).

[4] Teachers could indicate that more than one writing goal was emphasized in the assignment.

Exhibit 15. Types of Writing Goals for Assignments as Reported by Teachers

Writing Goals	Partnership Schools	Delayed Partnership Schools	Overall
Rhetorical Decisions	50.2%	45.6%	48.0%
	143	120	263
Structure	54.7%	65.0%	59.7%
	156	171	327
Conventions	24.6%	27.8%	26.1%
	70	73	143
Process	44.6%	46.0%	45.3%
	127	121	248
Planning/Inventing	15.4%	14.4%	15.0%
	44	38	82
Information gathering/note taking	9.1%	6.8%	8.0%
	26	18	44
Peer review	3.5%	3.8%	3.6%
	10	10	20
Revision	7.4%	8.7%	8.0%
	21	23	44
Editing	8.1%	11.8%	9.9%
	23	31	54
Reflection	1.1%	0.4%	0.7%
	3	1	4
No clear writing goal evident	15.0%	11.0%	14.0%
	44	29	73

Note: Teachers were instructed to check all that apply. A sum of the percentages within a column can be greater than 100%.
Source: Teacher Assignment Coding Guide (Rubric 1a)

Alignment of intended writing goals with goals manifested in the assignment task. According to research on high-quality teacher assignments, effective writing assignments should manifest the teachers' intended learning goals in the design of the assignment task (Matsumura & Pascal, 2003). Such alignment is believed to increase teachers' ability to monitor students' progress towards developing core skills and concepts and to adjust instruction accordingly. In our study, scorers, using teachers' descriptions of the learning goals for the assignment and reviewing the assignment materials submitted, scored each assignment on the alignment of the learning goals with the assignment task. Assignments received scores from 1 to 4, with higher scores representing greater alignment between stated goals and those manifested in the assignment task as judged by the teacher-scorers.[5] Exhibit 16 shows the mean and standard deviation for the

[5] A score of 1 indicated that that there was little or no sense of writing-related goals intended for the assignment, as judged against the study's definition of writing goals. A score of 2 indicated that there was little or no alignment

writing goals alignment scores for the overall sample and separately for each condition. There was no statistical difference between partnership and delayed partnership in the extent to which the assignment tasks manifested the goals reported by teachers.

Exhibit 16. Alignment of Teacher Reported Writing Goals for Assignments with Goals Manifested in Assignment Tasks, Mean

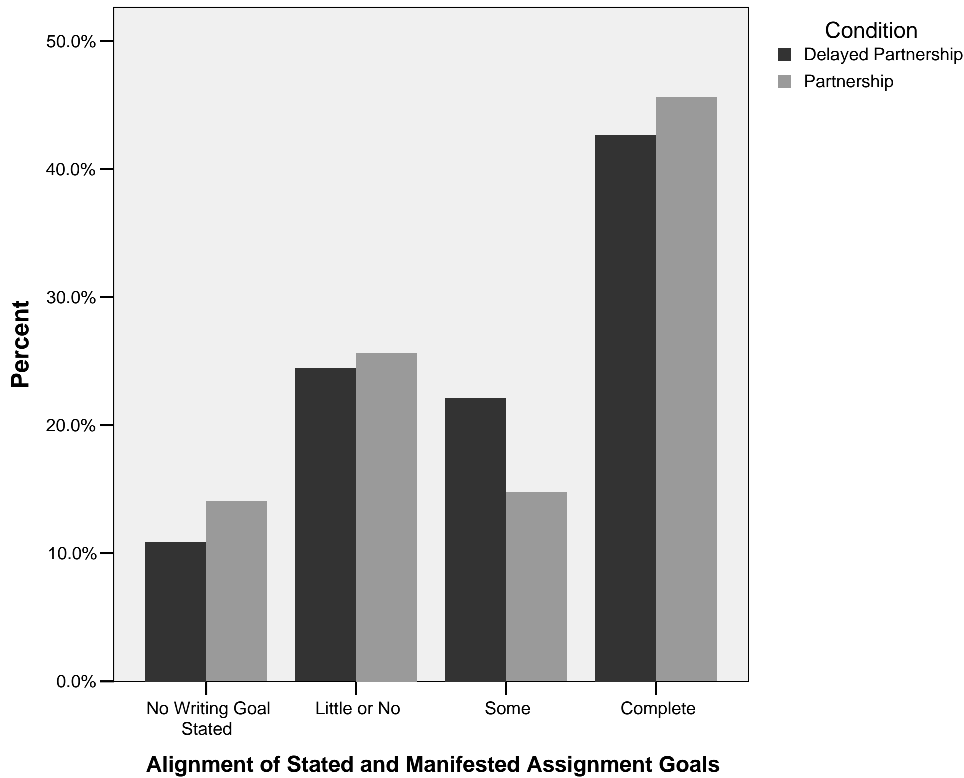
	Study Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Alignment of teacher reported goals with goals manifested in assignment task	Partnership	284	2.85	1.216
	Delayed Partnership	263	2.89	1.149
	Overall	547	2.87	1.183

Source: Teacher Assignment Coding Guide (Rubric 1b)

Exhibit 17 depicts how the scores were distributed across the various score points by condition. More than 40% of assignments (44%) received a top score of 4, that is, the assignment task (including all written and verbal instructions and materials) manifested the writing goals reported by the teacher. There was little or no alignment between the stated and manifested goals (scale point 2) for 25% of the assignments, the next most frequent score on the goal alignment scale. And more than one in ten assignments (13%) received the lowest score (scale point 1) because, as judged by teacher-scorers, there was no evidence of a clear writing goal in the goals reported by teachers.

between the teacher's stated goal and the goals manifested in the assignment. A score of 3 indicated some but not all of the teacher's intended goals were manifested in the assignment. A score of 4 indicated the assignment task manifested all the writing goals intended and reported by the teacher.

Exhibit 17. Alignment of Teacher Reported Writing Goals for Assignments with Goals Manifested in Assignment Tasks, Distribution



Source: Teacher Assignment Coding Guide (Rubric 1b)

Opportunities to construct knowledge. More rigorous assignments require students to construct knowledge, challenging them to move beyond the mere reproduction of information they have been exposed to. Tasks that emphasize construction of knowledge require students to do more than summarize or paraphrase information they have read, heard or viewed; these tasks require students to generate or explore new ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation of information (Matsumura et al., 2002; Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001; Shkolnik et al., 2007). Next we describe the descriptive results for opportunities to construct knowledge for expository assignments.[6] Using a rubric developed by the study team, teacher-scorers judged each expository assignment on the extent to which the assignment task required students to construct knowledge through their written responses. The expository assignments received scores from 1 to 3 with a score point of 1 indicating that students can satisfy all or most of the requirements of the assignment task by simply reproducing information they have read, heard or, viewed. A score of 3 indicates that the dominant expectation of the assignment calls for students

[6] Of the 554 assignments collected, 73 of them were imaginative assignments (e.g., memoir, poetry, fiction drama). These assignments were equally distributed across partnership and delayed partnership schools. Separate rubrics were developed for expository and imaginative assignments to assess the opportunities within the assignment for construction of knowledge. The rubrics for imaginative assignments assessed the extent to which students were required to make meaning or to create a point through their imaginative writing. Due to the small number of imaginative assignments, we have decided to only present the results for the expository assignments.

to go beyond mere reproduction of information and to generate and explore ideas through interpretation, analysis, synthesis and/or the evaluation of information.[7]

Exhibit 18 shows the mean and standard deviation scores for the overall sample and for partnership and delayed partnership schools. In the baseline year, there is no statistical difference between the schools in the two conditions on the extent to which teachers' expository assignments call for students to construct knowledge.

Exhibit 18. Extent to which Assignments Require Students to Construct Knowledge in the Completion of the Assignment Task, Mean (Expository Assignments Only)

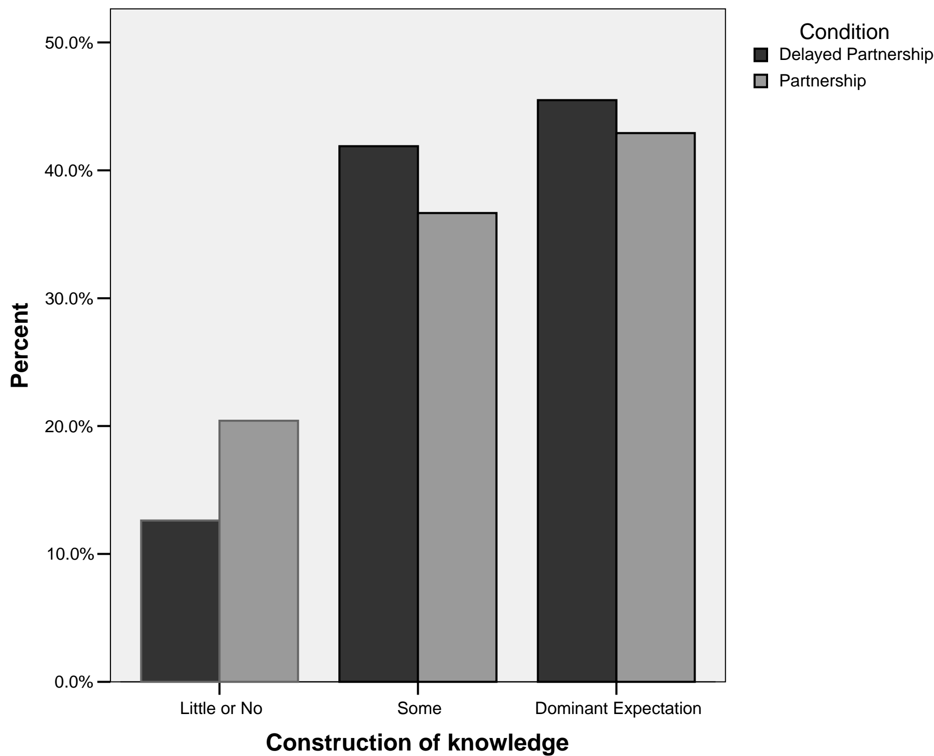
	Study Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Extent to which assignments require students to construct knowledge	Partnership	240	2.23	.765
	Delayed Partnership	222	2.33	.689
	Overall	462	2.27	.731

Source: Teacher Assignment Coding Guide (Rubric 2a)

Overall, across both conditions, we have found that expository assignments on average have some expectation that students will create new knowledge but this is not the dominant expectation for the majority of the assignments submitted. Approximately 80% of all expository assignments have some expectation for knowledge construction—some interpretation, analysis, and/or synthesis required—and for 44% of the assignments this is the dominant expectation. Fewer than one in five of the assignments (16%) required little or no knowledge construction; more of the assignments submitted by teachers in partnership schools received this designation than delayed partnership teachers (20% versus 13%) (Exhibit 19).

[7] The rubric also includes a *stretch* score point of 4 that indicates an assignment that involves two stages of knowledge construction with the first construction stimulating an additional related knowledge construction. No assignments in the baseline year received a score of 4.

Exhibit 19. Extent to Which Assignments Require Students to Construct Knowledge in the Completion of the Assignment Task, Distribution (Expository Assignments Only)



Source: Teacher Assignment Coding Guide (Rubric 2a)

Summary of Findings about Student Opportunities to Write from the Baseline Year

Writing was the most important instructional goal for English/language arts teachers across both conditions in the study. It was more important than responding to literature and reading comprehension, two other goals reported by teachers as important on the days they completed logs. The importance of writing among these teachers is not surprising given that their schools all volunteered to be part of a study of writing professional development. The logs simply confirm that for the particular teachers in the study, on average, writing is important to them. The fact that partnership and delayed partnership schools do not differ with respect to the importance of writing is both important and encouraging because random assignment appears to have created equivalent groups. Currently, there is no evidence that random assignment has created any adverse incentives to delayed partnership schools or “halo” effects in partnership schools.

Log and survey data suggest different patterns with respect to teachers’ specific purposes for writing. In general, the survey results suggest students gained less practice with all forms of writing than was suggested by the logs. At the same time, on these measures and in both instruments, the partnership and delayed partnership schools were equivalent, and there was plenty of room to increase the frequency with which students gain practice with different written genres.

Both log and survey data indicate that students spent the most time composing text, relative to other aspects of the writing process. Planning and editing were emphasized as well, but to a lesser degree than composing in terms of time devoted to writing. Log data also indicate students shared their writing with peers and evaluated their own writing about one class period per week. In any one class period, students were likely to focus on just one writing process, rather than multiple processes. As with the data on purposes of writing, these figures suggest that teachers were nowhere near a "ceiling" with respect to the measures of how much they engaged students' writing processes. Except for the frequency with which teachers reported providing feedback to students on their writing through conferencing, there were no differences between partnership and delayed partnership schools with respect to writing processes, either.

Not surprisingly, English/language arts teachers engaged students in more forms of writing than did other teachers and focused much more on writing processes than did teachers in other subject areas. Only in one area—writing explanations—did teachers from other subject areas appear to give more emphasis than did English/language arts teachers. As with the other measures, baseline data suggest partnership and delayed partnership schools were equivalent.

The writing assignments teachers use to assess student writing skills and proficiencies provide an additional view of the opportunities available to students to write. Teachers submitted over 500 assignments for review and analysis that represented their best opportunities to assess student writing during each grading period. For a majority of these assignments, the teachers' intended objective was to emphasize the development of students' writing skills associated with structure, for example organization, topic sentences, and transitions. This finding is not surprising given the current emphasis at the district and state levels on writing assessments that focus on standard essay writing skills. When assignments were evaluated for the extent to which teachers' intended goals were manifested in the actual assignment tasks, less than 50% of all assignments were judged to be in perfect alignment. Nearly one-third of all assignments were judged to have little or no alignment between intended and manifested goals or no clear intended writing skill or concept goal at all. This is certainly an area where there is room for improvement. Finally, an overwhelming majority of the expository assignments analyzed were found to include some expectation that students would need to move beyond the simple reproduction of information and create new knowledge to complete the assignment task. In over 40% of the assignments this was the dominant expectation of the task. These findings provide some evidence that a majority of the assignments submitted and analyzed had fairly high expectations for students and the writing they produced to address the tasks.

Conclusion

This section examined data from teacher logs and teacher assignments submitted by seventh and eighth grade English/language arts teachers and a teacher survey administered to all teachers. Across all instruments, teacher background characteristics, opportunities for students to write in class, and formal time for teacher collaboration were similar at baseline for partnership and delayed partnership schools. Additionally, the measures leave room for schools to grow over time. Having established that the randomized trial was successful in creating equivalent groups at baseline, we turn next to a discussion of what activities partnership schools engaged in during their baseline year.

Chapter 3 Partnership Formation

For both partnership and delayed partnership schools, the 2007-08 school year was supposed to be largely "business as usual" with respect to participation in writing professional development. Partnership schools and sites were directed to use the year for "planning," defined as working together to develop a "partnership" that did not introduce teachers to new instructional strategies. In fall 2008, delayed partnership schools received their first incentive check ($3,000) for participating in the evaluation to spend on something other than writing professional development.[8]

The planning between sites and partnership schools was to focus on inservice opportunities to improve writing instruction that met certain key criteria. These criteria, developed through focus groups with site directors experienced in partnership development, sought to define minimum standards for a partnership for purposes of the research study. It is important to note that little is known about how partnerships as defined for the study conform to the process of natural partnership development that takes place currently among local Writing Project sites outside of our study. We are engaging in a smaller study of naturally occurring partnerships to investigate that question and will present results in the Year 3 report.

For purposes of the study, the definition emphasizes that an implicit or explicit goal of partnership work is to benefit *all* students in the school by improving the instructional practices and climate at the school. In addition, and to accomplish this goal, the group agreed that all partnerships share the following criteria:

- Partnerships are *co-designed*. For this study, that means that both the local site and the school must share an understanding of the goals and strategies of the partnership.
- Partnerships are *co-resourced*. There must be evidence, over multiple years, of a district and/or school leaders' commitment to the partnership (i.e., the provision of resources).
- A *critical mass* of teachers at a given school (35% to100% of the entire teaching staff) must participate in the professional development, regardless of how teachers are selected into a partnership. The strategies for recruiting teachers to participate in NWP programming may include (but are not limited to) recruiting volunteers or targeting specific groups of teachers (e.g., a grade level or department).
- Participating teachers must receive *sufficient* professional development. The critical mass of participating teachers (defined above) should receive at least 30 hours of professional development (deliverable by local Writing Project staff and/or local teacher consultants) each year.

We use these criteria as a framework for describing partnership plans (and in subsequent years, partnership implementation), and as a basis for determining which relationships between schools and local sites should be classified as partnerships, for the purpose of this evaluation, as opposed to long-term inservice agreements. We acknowledge that partnerships that meet these criteria might *not* be successful at improving teacher practice and student learning. Further, inservice

[8] They received another $5,000 at the conclusion of the year after researchers verified that they had not engaged in non-mandatory writing professional development (i.e., they had not engaged in any writing professional development not required by their state or district).

agreements that do not meet the criteria for partnerships might *be* successful at improving teacher practice and student learning.

This chapter describes the planning process and the resulting plans using the consensus definition as a guide. In all but two partnerships, some planning occurred in the 2007-08 school year. In the particular schools where partnership planning did not occur, principals changed between the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years. For the remaining partnerships, the story of the planning process is one of variation. The local sites differ significantly from each other, and there is substantial variation in the characteristics of schools participating in the study. Below, we describe how these differences led to different strategies for partnership planning and to plans that differ in terms of co-resourcing and teacher participation (in terms of how teachers are supposed to be recruited, the proportion of a school's teachers who participate, and the nature of professional development they should receive). We conclude by reflecting on the development process and the challenges and supports that affected it.

Co-design

The goal of the 2007-08 school year was for sites and schools to develop a plan for a three-year partnership. Who was involved in the planning process, the nature of the needs assessment, and the pace of the planning process differed across the sites in our sample. Not surprisingly, the plans varied in terms of content focus and professional development formats.

Co-design Process. Sites used the planning process to form relationships and develop buy-in from teachers and administrators in partnership schools. Partnerships differed with respect to who they involved and how many people they engaged in planning partnership activities. Exhibit 20 shows how many partnerships involved teachers only, a mix of teachers and formal leaders (e.g., principal, district English/language arts coordinator, literacy coach), almost solely formal leaders, or no one from the school in the planning process.

Exhibit 20: Participants in Partnership Planning

	Teachers only	Mix of teachers and formal leaders	Almost Solely Formal leaders	No planning
Number of partnerships	1	14	3	2

Guiding decisions about engaging teachers and leaders in the process for most sites was a strong belief that teachers must be at the center, a core principle of NWP professional development (Lieberman & Wood, 2002). Several sites used planning processes that engaged all teachers in the school, such as by conducting a faculty-wide survey or using faculty meeting time to generate ideas and develop support for a particular plan's goals and overall direction. Other partnerships used a steering committee to direct the plan. In others, site directors conducted one-on-one meetings with particular teachers (typically English/language arts teachers) to identify needs. Most partnerships combined different methods for soliciting input on plans, relying on one strategy for most of the planning work but using other strategies to expand the range of input or to come to a final decision about the plan (see Exhibit 21 for a detailed example of how one site involved teachers in the planning process).

Exhibit 21: Engaging Teachers in the Planning Process

> For one partnership, the planning process began with the site conducting multiple meetings with different teachers in the school. The partnership then created a steering committee composed of select teachers representing most departments, administrators, and representatives of the Writing Project site to develop the partnership plan. The site administered a survey to the entire staff to identify current instructional practices and interests for professional development. The site then presented the survey results to the entire staff, making it transparent how teachers' needs led to decisions about the content of professional development.

In three cases, however, a formal leader assumed such a dominant role that opportunities for broader teacher participation were largely eliminated. Exhibit 22 describes the special role that literacy coaches played in providing site directors information about teachers' needs in those cases.

Exhibit 22: The Role of Literacy Coaches in the Planning Process

> In some partnerships, the site worked mostly with one formal leader, like an administrator or a literacy coach, to plan the partnership.[9] Literacy coaches often felt that they had a special role to play in partnership planning. To perform their role as a literacy coach well, they needed to know the curriculum, teachers' strengths, and professional development needs. In some cases, the site leaders seemed satisfied with the extent of the coaches' involvement and coaches leveraged their knowledge to become effective champions. In other cases, literacy coaches largely prevented site directors from meeting with teachers alone, so the sites only learned the coaches' perspectives on teachers' needs during the planning process.

One of the most commonly used processes in developing plans was a formal needs assessment intended to help local sites tailor activities to meet teachers' interests and needs in writing professional development. Most frequently, the needs assessment took the form of a teacher survey. In one site, the survey was instrumental not only in identifying needs but also in reducing the influence of a particularly strong voice in the school about how funds for the partnership should be used. At that site, the needs assessment helped that teacher and others understand that hers was a minority view and that many other needs were more pressing among faculty members in the school. In another partnership, the local Writing Project had teachers administer a student assessment, score the assessment, and use the results to diagnose areas of focus for the partnership. In still other sites, needs assessments were more informal and based on conversations in hallways or meetings with school or district staff to identify professional development needs.

Pace of Co-design. The design process proceeded at different rates for different sites. Overall, eighteen of the twenty partnerships achieved some level of co-design by June 2008. The other

[9] In this document we use the term 'literacy coach' to describe teachers who are released from their classroom duties for some or all of their day to support other teachers' literacy instruction. Literacy coaches may be assigned to one school or may serve multiple schools.

two developed began planning after new principals were hired over the summer and completed initial plans in August 2008.

In a few other partnerships, the process proceeded more slowly. In at least one of these cases, this slow pace was due to the site's previous experience in working with schools and districts, which led to the conclusion that these relationships develop best and most naturally if they are not rushed. In two other partnerships, it was clear that there would be key staff turnover during the summer; in one case the school was to be reconstituted and in the other the principal was retiring. Anticipating turnover in staff, the site directors decided to postpone some planning activities and the development of the final plan until the new staff could participate in the planning process. As this example highlights, the local context often determined the most appropriate pace for planning.

Duration of Plans. One feature most plans had in common was that they did not articulate goals and activities beyond the 2008-09 school year. Of the twenty plans, only one stretches beyond the 2008-09 school year, and six had clear plans only through summer 2008 (see Exhibit 23).[10]

Exhibit 23: Duration of Plan

	No plan	Through Summer 2008 only	Through 2008-09 school year	Beyond 2008-09 school year
Number of partnerships	2	6	11	1

The short duration of plans implies that additional, substantial planning work remains to be done. Three of the sites formalized their partnership agreement through signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the participating school or district. Although MOUs are not required, they are likely analogous to the contracts that some partnerships outside of the study use to ensure that districts get the professional development they desire and that sites receive appropriate compensation in return.

Content of Plans. Due to the co-designed nature of this planning process, the topics and format of the professional development offered to teachers naturally will vary substantially across partnerships in order to respond to the needs of the school and the strengths of the site. The content foci, for example, run the gamut from writing across the curriculum to making the connection between reading/literacy and writing, to strategies for teaching reading and writing in a block schedule. While only two sites reported professional development activities that focused on preparation for writing tests, many schools hope that improved test scores will be an outcome of the partnership. Delivery formats of the professional development seem to have a strong imprint of the NWP, with most sites using formats such as Invitational and Open Summer Institutes, multi-day workshop series, and book studies as core aspects of their partnerships. Demonstration lessons (outside of Institutes) and coaching/observation were less common.

None of these topics or formats is inherently best for achieving partnership goals. We expect that the partnerships that are likely to be most successful long-term will be those that represent the best match of school needs with site offerings, generate substantial teacher interest in participation, and have an appropriate level of resources to support deep and sustained teacher

[10] Those sites continued to offer professional development in the fall semester. Data on their extended plans will be presented in the Year 3 report.

learning. We next describe the partnership plans in terms of their co-resourcing and anticipated teacher participation.

Co-resourcing

Just as the planning process has differed from partnership to partnership, the resulting plans also have varied with respect to the way and the extent to which plans call for co-resourcing. In some cases, the co-resourcing of partnerships seems to be an area of particular challenge. Typically (i.e., outside of the study), partnerships exist only when Writing Project sites and schools or districts gather sufficient resources to support sustained work. Two main ways that sufficient resources are garnered outside of the evaluation are through grant writing and direct payments from schools or districts to the local Writing Project for professional development. As part of the current study, co-resourcing is partly facilitated by the $12,000 annual incentive sites have received to support partnership development. Those funds are not intended to provide all of the funding a partnership will need, so sites and schools must raise additional funds using approaches that they might otherwise employ for that purpose. Our focus in the planning year was on the extent to which schools were planning to provide resources to support partnership work. Importantly, contributions to partnership work can include both financial (e.g., stipends for participation) and human and social resources (e.g., assistance from a coach, release time for teachers).

In many cases, it is too early to tell whether partnerships will be able to meet the challenge of co-resourcing professional development activities. Eight partnerships had plans for co-resourcing that were not sufficiently well developed for us to judge what resources would be contributed from the school to support the partnerships (see Table 17). Two had no co-resourcing planned, and three partnerships had achieved what we describe as a "low" level of co-resourcing, for example, providing a few teachers with a few hours of release time for partnership professional development. We characterize four partnerships as thus far having a modest level of co-resourcing, which includes releasing (or paying the cost of teachers' time or tuition) all teachers for some amount of time or a few teachers for more extensive professional development. Three partnerships had plans where the level of co-resourcing appeared to support the breadth and intensity of participation that would lead partnerships to meet the four partnership criteria.

Exhibit 24: Planned Co-resourcing

	To soon to tell	None planned	Low level	Modest level	Level supports meeting four criteria
Number of partnerships	8	2	3	4	3

Several site directors reported that they did not have a clear understanding that co-resourcing would be necessary to support full partnerships in the study, which may explain why half of all partnerships have no clear plan for co-resourcing yet. In turn, site directors did not fully communicate the requirement to principals and district leaders. Given the multiple demands for resources in all schools, co-resourcing may reflect school priorities. It also may reflect real constraints on the parts of schools and sites to identify sources of support for partnership efforts to improve writing instruction. Either way, it will be important for partnerships to identify

resources soon if they are to effect major changes in teachers' knowledge and skills within the time period of the study.

Although several schools do plan to provide financial support for stipends or substitutes, partnerships generally plan to rely on schools providing teacher time to participate in professional development. From interviews we conducted, it appears that the majority of the partnership schools will provide release time for teachers to participate in professional development activities. All schools that provided time already had some or all of the following structures where teachers shared time to plan during the teacher contract day: inservice days, common planning time by grade level or department, or early release or late-start days. When schools had discretion as to how to use inservice days, partnerships planned to make use of these days to offer NWP professional development. In the two partnerships where districts were involved in planning, partnerships were able to negotiate directly for the use of district inservice to support professional development in writing.

For the two schools that had no co-resourcing planned, teachers are expected do all partnership work on their own time, not school time, and the school and district have not offered any financial resources. The lack of commitment from those schools calls into question the extent to which this is a *partnership* between the schools and the Writing Project sites at the current time or merely a professional development series open to volunteers from participating schools.

Critical Mass of Participating Teachers

The NWP has a long history of offering in-depth professional development to individual teacher volunteers. The flagship event, the Invitational Summer Institute, is designed to transform participants from across the disciplines who volunteer for in-depth professional development (Lieberman & Wood, 2004). Partnership work differs from other types of NWP work in that the underlying goal of partnerships is broader school reform focused on writing instruction, which necessitates reaching a critical mass of teachers in each school. Although mandating professional development would be one way to achieve such a goal, keeping participation voluntary would appear to be a value congruent with NWP principles. Another factor shaping sites' ability to reach a critical mass is their decision to make any or all events open to all teachers or to target events to specific groups of teachers.

Voluntary versus Mandatory Participation. Site directors we interviewed seemed sensitive to the advantages and drawbacks of each type of participation strategy. Their approaches reflected, at least in part, their past experiences in organizing professional development. Site directors with extensive experience leading professional development with volunteers were quick to recognize the benefits of teachers having the choice to participate (see Exhibit 25). Other site directors, schools, and districts brought experience with whole school reform and focused on the importance of gathering a critical mass of teachers to work collectively to explore and apply new ideas. In several partnerships, the decision to mandate attendance at some events has been a source of tension between site directors (who hold that voluntary participation is a critical feature of NWP work) and school leaders (who are accustomed to requiring participation at inservice events). School administrators may believe it is important to require participation in these events so that the partnership reaches all, or all targeted, teachers in the school.

Exhibit 25: Voluntary Participation in Partnerships

> Many site directors expressed a preference for working with teachers who volunteer to engage in the professional development rather than those who are required to attend. One site director expressed the preference for volunteers this way: "I would not take someone who has been forced there. I mean it has to be voluntary; otherwise … It's like hell. You can't make them come. There's lots of ways to encourage people, but mandatory's not one of them." In place of mandating teachers to attend the partnership professional development, site directors envisioned a range of strategies to build teacher interest. Some recruited teachers to attend the Invitational Summer Institute hoping the teachers then would act as ambassadors for the Writing Project work. Others planned to leverage mandatory inservice days early in the school year to introduce all teachers to their work and, through that engagement, recruit teachers for ongoing, more intensive professional development. In general, site directors envisioned an organic diffusion process in which teachers who are engaged in the partnership essentially perform the ongoing recruiting. As one site director said, "My feeling would be assuming that the group we work with really buys into some things this fall, they talk to their colleagues, and then they start to work with them. For all we know it could lead to peer interaction [and] peer modeling of instructional strategies."

As Table 16 showed, some partnerships were still in very early stages of planning—many of these had no partnership plan past summer 2008—and had not developed a strategy for building teacher participation during the 2008-09 school year. Of those partnerships that had articulated a participation strategy, most reported making participation voluntary for teachers. No partnerships required participation in Invitational Summer Institutes, as that would be inconsistent with the approach used to recruit teachers for those events (i.e., they require an application process). Only four of the partnerships planned to mandate participation for all teachers in all events (excluding the Invitational Summer Institute), and a few others planned to require some participation in some events for some or all teachers (see Exhibit 26). Most often when partnerships planned to mandate participation, teachers or groups of teachers (e.g., English/language arts teachers) would be required to attend events that are scheduled during the contract day (e.g., for a school inservice) while other opportunities that happen after school or during the summer (e.g., an afterschool graduate level course) would be voluntary.

Exhibit 26: Teacher Participation Strategy

	Too Soon to Tell	Voluntary	Mix of Voluntary and Mandatory	Mandatory
Number of Partnerships*	5	8	4	4

*Numbers do not add up to 20 because in one partnership, participation is mandatory for English/language arts teachers but it is too soon to tell what the participation strategy will be for other teachers.

Open Versus Targeted Participation in Events. Many partnerships are working to recruit participants from across the disciplines. Core to the NWP philosophy is the research-based understanding that writing is an important way for people to generate knowledge within disciplines, with the implication that writing needs to be taught across the curriculum. Although most of the partnership schools have chosen to open up the writing professional development opportunities to the entire faculty, at least three partnerships said that they have chosen to target specific groups of teachers, especially in the initial years of the partnership. For example, in one partnership, the English/language arts and social studies teachers are recruited for participation, but the principal said that they felt that mathematics and science teachers are "not ready" as they currently are struggling with curricular changes.[11] Another partnership plans to target English/language arts teachers initially for more intensive professional development, and then add mathematics teachers in the future to generate excitement about incorporating writing across the curriculum. This particular partnership was unique in restricting participation in this way.

Expected Reach of Professional Development in the First Year. Not surprisingly, some of the partnerships, particularly those that have made participation voluntary and/or targeted specific groups of teachers, do not have plans that suggest that the partnership will meet the criteria of a *critical mass* (35% to100% of the entire teaching staff) of teachers who should be involved in writing professional development for the first year of partnership work. In almost half of the partnerships, it is too soon to tell whether they will meet this target because there has not yet been a firm commitment from potential volunteers. Exhibit 27 presents the anticipated breadth of participation in 2008-09 partnership professional development as of June 2008.

Exhibit 27: Breadth of Anticipated Teacher Participation

	Too Soon to Tell	Less than 10% of Teachers	11-30% of Teachers	More than 30% of Teachers
Number of Partnerships	8	2	4	6

As with the participation strategy, in some sites, the plan did not include a fully articulated plan for engaging a critical mass of teachers, so our confidence in the accuracy of these estimates varies across partnerships. For example, one site's estimates for their partnerships are based on a show of hands at a staff meeting for who was interested in attending key professional development activities in the coming year, but in other partnerships participation was required by the principal so we are more confident in the sites' estimates. At that partnership school, the professional development events had already been scheduled into the school calendar.

Sufficient Professional Development

Although many partnerships did not have sufficiently well-developed plans to know whether a critical mass of teachers would participate in much professional development during 2008-09, fewer partnerships had any concerns about whether the amount of professional development participating teachers will receive would be *sufficient* (i.e., it would be least 30 contact hours during the 2008-09 school year, including summer 2008). Of the twelve partnerships that had

[11] Several schools in the study employ a 'middle school' model that includes block scheduling of joint time for a teacher to provide English/language arts and social studies (or mathematics and science) instruction during a longer, integrated class period.

developed a participation plan, all reported that they intended to have participating teachers receive 30 or more contact hours each year. In eight partnerships, the plan was not developed far enough into the 2008-09 school year to ascertain whether teachers will receive 30 contact hours, but in some of these it does not look likely given that programming would be almost entirely outside of the contract day.

Conclusion

The study and its resources were no doubt important catalysts for partnership formation among these 20 sites; whether these partnerships would have formed without this set of circumstances is unclear. Regardless, many sites and schools have begun to develop relationships, goals, and plans that may turn into partnerships that meet all criteria established for the study. For some sites, it is simply too soon to tell whether partnerships will develop and grow as intended. From our initial observations, at least one thing is certain: partnerships take time to develop. As a consequence, the evaluation's longitudinal design appears to have been wise, since the significant and broad impacts, if there are any, may take up to three years to come to fruition.

Several factors may help explain the variation we observed in the planning process. We attribute some of the variation in the progress of partnership development to sites' variability with respect to their experience in partnership formation and their approach to needs assessment. Other key factors were schools' interest in engaging in writing reform and the other initiatives competing for administrator attention and teacher time. Accountability systems loomed large in many partnerships, sometimes serving as an asset that enabled site directors to argue that the partnership should be a priority initiative in the school or sometimes acting as a potential barrier to deep, sustained work on authentic writing instruction. Substantial variation also existed across sites in the ease with which knowledge and lessons from other work transferred smoothly to the partnership formation task. Finally, in a few cases, turnover in district, school, or site staff slowed partnership development.

At the conclusion of the planning year, no sites had a plan stretching beyond one year that including co-resourcing and a level of teacher participation that would meet the definition of a partnership used in this study. However, all partnerships made progress in development. Over the next three years, we will examine the implementation and evolution of partnership plans, tracking which ones develop into full-fledged partnerships, exploring what supports that evolutionary trajectory, and measuring outcomes from the intensive, school-based work that is the core of NWP partnerships.

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Appendix A.

Preliminary Teacher Log Reliability Data

Given the current small sample size of paired observations available for the calculation of agreement rates, all reliability data and interpretations presented here must be considered preliminary. Sixteen paired observations were completed with both a teacher and a researcher completing the log for the same observed lesson (researcher-teacher pair). For six of those paired observations, a second researcher was present and also completed a log. For these 6 observations, it is then possible to compute agreement rates for both researcher pairs (researcher-researcher pair) as well as for researcher-teacher pairs.

Table A-1 displays interrater reliability for *writing goals* for two types of pairs: researcher-teacher pairs and researcher-researcher pairs. For each writing goal item listed on the log, raters were asked to select one of the following codes: (1) a major goal, (2) a minor goal, or (3) not a goal today. Interrater reliability was calculated for two levels of agreement: (1) identical agreement, where raters made an identical choice, and (2) comparable agreement where one rater marked "a major goal" while the other marked "a minor goal." Additionally, two different ways for achieving agreement were taken into consideration: (1) by selecting either a "major goal" or a "minor goal" code when an event takes place, or (2) by selecting "not a goal today" code when an event does not take place. Clearly it is easier to reach agreement in the latter scenario. To get a more accurate picture of interrater agreement, we calculated reliability excluding cases where raters reached agreement by not selecting a "minor goal" or "major goal" code designation (i.e., agreement by omission).

The "average" response rates across items (see bottom row of Table A-1) indicates that agreements between researchers are higher than those between teachers and researchers. On average, researcher-researcher pairs reached comparable agreement (when excluding agreements by omission) approximately 50% the time (see Column 8), while researcher-teacher pairs selected comparable agreements just over one-third of the time (see Column 4).

The agreement rate data in Table A-1 also suggest that agreement varied considerably from item to item. Generally, reliability is low for the items with low frequency (thus raters reached agreement by omission). Some examples of low incidence goals are "developing research skills" (item F) and "developing speaking, listening, or oral presentation skills" (item G). At the same time, the agreement also is low for other goals like "building vocabulary" (item C) and "preparing students for a standardized test" (item I), particularly among researcher-teacher pairs. Disagreements on these items typically occur when teachers select them as a "major goal" or "minor goal" and researchers select them as "not a goal today." This discrepancy suggests that these were often implicit goals, not readily observable to researchers who did not know the teachers' intention behind the implemented lesson.

Overall these preliminary results need to be interpreted with caution as agreement rates (particularly those calculated by excluding agreements when both observers coded for non-occurrence) are based on very small sample sizes.

Table A-1. Interrater Reliability on Writing Goals

	Researcher vs. Teacher (n=16 pairs)				Researcher vs. Researcher (n=6 pairs)			
	Including agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event		Excluding agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event (# of cases used for calculation)		Including agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event"		Excluding agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event (# of cases used for calculation)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Identical Agreement	Comparable Agreement*	Identical Agreement	Comparable Agreement*	Identical Agreement	Comparable Agreement*	Identical Agreement	Comparable Agreement*
a. Improving writing skills	0.50	0.69	0.43 (14)	0.64 (14)	0.33	0.67	0.33 (6)	0.67 (6)
b. Improving skills in grammar, usage, punctuation, or spelling	0.69	0.88	0.64 (14)	0.86 (14)	0.50	1.00	0.50 (6)	1.00 (6)
c. Building vocabulary	0.25	0.31	0.14 (14)	0.21 (14)	0.83	0.83	0.50 (2)	0.50 (2)
d. Developing reading comprehension skills	0.69	0.69	0.58 (12)	0.58 (12)	0.67	0.67	0.33 (3)	0.33 (3)
e. Developing skills in responding to literature/text	0.81	0.81	0.77 (13)	0.77 (13)	0.83	1.00	0.75 (4)	1.00 (4)
f. Developing research skills	0.88	0.88	0.00 (2)	0.00 (2)	1.00	1.00	NA (0)	NA (0)
g. Developing speaking, listening, or oral presentation skills	0.63	0.69	0.14 (7)	0.29 (7)	0.83	0.83	0.00 (1)	0.00 (1)
h. Preparing students for a standardized test	0.38	0.44	0.17 (14)	0.25 (14)	1.00	1.00	NA (0)	NA (0)
i. Assessing knowledge or skills (e.g., giving a test)	0.56	0.63	0.13 (8)	0.25 (8)	0.67	0.67	0.00 (2)	0.00 (2)
j. Other *(please specify)*:	0.86	0.86	0.00 (3)	0.00 (3)	1.00	1.00	NA (0)	NA (0)
Average	**0.62**	**0.69**	**0.30**	**0.38**	**0.77**	**0.87**	**0.34**	**0.50**

*Comparable Agreement = counted as agreement when one person selected "major goal today" and the other selected "minor goal today"

Source: Teacher Log Question 2

Table A-2 displays interrater agreements for the *purposes of writing* log items. Raters coded for a purpose if it was part of the students' writing assignment, worksheet, quiz, or test on that day. For this set of items, there was insufficient data from the researcher-researcher paired observations to allow for comparisons of agreement rates with researcher-teacher pairs. As was noted for the *writing goals* items, agreements varied considerably from item to item. For example, purposes for writing such as "to reflect on an experience or topic" (item B) and "to express himself or herself creatively" (item C) have relatively high reliability, while purposes such as "to monitor or keep track of learning" (item A) and the three items related to "gaining practice" (items H-J) have low reliability. Again these results need to be interpreted with caution as the number of data points used for calculating agreement rates is extremely limited.

Table A-2. Interrater Reliability on Purposes of Writing

	Researcher vs. Teacher (16 pairs)			**Researcher vs. Researcher (6 pairs)**		
	Including agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event	Excluding agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event (# of cases used for calculation)		Including agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event	Excluding agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event (# of cases used for calculation)	
a. To monitor or keep track of learning	0.81	0.00	(3)	0.83	0.00	(1)
b. To reflect on an experience or topic	0.88	0.71	(7)	0.83	0.50	(2)
c. To express himself or herself creatively	0.94	0.50	(2)	1.00	NA	(0)
d. To recount a story or event through narrative	0.81	0.00	(3)	1.00	NA	(0)
e. To describe a thing, place, or procedure	1.00	1.00	(6)	0.83	0.67	(3)
f. To explain or analyze a concept, process, or relationship	0.69	0.17	(6)	1.00	1.00	(0)
g. To make an argument intended to persuade others	0.88	0.33	(3)	0.83	0.00	(1)
h. To gain practice with writing mechanics within student own writing	0.69	0.17	(6)	0.67	0.00	(2)
i. To gain practice with particular kinds of writing	0.75	0.00	(5)	0.67	0.00	(2)
j. To gain practice with forms of writing encountered on standardized tests	0.63	0.14	(7)	1.00	NA	(0)
k. Other	0.56	0.00	(7)	0.67	0.50	(3)
Average	**0.79**	**0.27**		**0.85**	**0.33**	

Source: Teacher Log Question 6

Table A-3 shows interrater agreement rates for the *writing process* items from the log instrument. Raters coded for an item if it was a writing process that was part of the writing instruction on that day. For this set of items, there was insufficient data from the researcher-researcher paired observations to allow for comparisons of agreement rates with research-teacher pairs. If we consider just the data with more than 4 observations from the *researcher-teacher* paired observations with non-occurrences excluded, there appears to be a relatively high agreement rate for items like "student shared or presented writing to peers" and "students worked on a shared group product," while there was little or no agreement for "student used models of writing to plan or compose a text." The disagreement on the latter item may be attributed to how raters understood the meaning of "models of writing." Again, given the limited amount of data collected, caution needs to be taken in interpreting these agreement rates.

Table A-3. Interrater Reliability on Writing Process

	Researcher vs. Teacher (16 pairs)			**Researcher vs. Researcher (6 pairs)**		
	Including agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event	Excluding agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event (# of cases used for calculation)		Including agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event	Excluding agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event (# of cases used for calculation)	
Student planned, composed, edited or revised multiple connected paragraphs	NA	NA	(0)	NA	NA	(0)
Audience for students' writing was someone outside the classroom	1.00	1.00	(1)	1.00	NA	(0)
Students worked on a group writing product	0.81	0.50	(6)	1.00	NA	(0)
Students received help or feedback on individual writing tasks	0.50	NA	(0)	0.83	0.67	(3)
Student met with the teacher to get oral feedback	0.50	0	(0)	1.00	NA	(0)
Student reviewed written feedback on writing from the teacher	0.88	NA	(0)	1.00	NA	(0)
Student reflected on or evaluated his or her own writing	0.88	NA	(0)	1.00	1.00	(1)
Student shared or presented writing to peers	0.88	0.71	(7)	1.00	1.00	(1)
Student analyzed what makes particular texts good or poor models of writing	0.94	0.00	(1)	1.00	NA	(0)
Student used models of writing to plan or compose a text	0.75	0.00	(4)	1.00	NA	(0)
Average	**0.79**	**0.37**		**0.98**	**0.89**	

Source: Teacher Log Questions 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10

Table A-4 displays interrater agreements for *minutes spent engaged in the writing process*. Raters recorded the minutes the student spent engaged in each writing process listed. Recordings that differ within 5 minutes of each other are considered to be in "comparable agreement." Again we see that agreement rates between researchers remain higher than that between teachers and researchers, and that agreement rates vary by item. . If we consider just the data with more than 4 observations from the *researcher-teacher* paired observations with non-occurrences excluded, we see that the data for minutes spent on *editing* appears more reliable than the data for *composing* and *brainstorming*.

Table A-4. Interrater Reliability on Minutes Spent Engaged in Writing Process

	Researcher vs. Teacher (16 pairs)			**Researcher vs. Researcher (6 pairs)**		
	Comparable agreement including agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event	Comparable agreement excluding agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event (# of cases used for calculation)		Comparable agreement including agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event	Comparable agreement excluding agreement by identifying non-occurrence of an event (# of cases used for calculation)	
Brainstorming	0.69	0.17	(6)	0.83	0.50	(2)
Composing	0.50	0.43	(14)	0.67	0.60	(5)
Revising	0.94	0.67	(3)	1.00	1.00	(1)
Editing	0.88	0.71	(7)	0.83	0.67	(3)
Other	0.56	0.30	(10)	0.67	0.33	(3)
Average	**0.71**	**0.46**		**0.80**	**0.62**	

*Comparable agreement = within 5 minutes difference is considered agreement

Source: Teacher Log Question 9

Appendix B

Teacher Assignments

2007 Summer Scoring Session and Reliability Data

A 3-day teacher assignment scoring session was held at SRI International (Menlo Park) on August 5-7, 2008. The scoring of teaching assignments took two full days, and the third day was dedicated to the scoring of student reflections to their own writing samples (student reflection data is not presented in this report). A total of 548 teacher assignments were coded and scored and 144 (26%) of those were double coded to assess the reliability of the scoring process. The training staff consisted of a lead trainer, Carmen Manning (University of Wisconsin, Eau-Claire), Michelle Bissonette, a high school English/language arts teacher with extensive scoring experience on other SRI projects, and Amy Hafter of SRI. Twelve teacher-scorers were recruited and hired from across the local region, all of whom are active middle school English/language arts teachers. Half of the teachers were recruited through the local NWP network; the others were recruited by SRI staff. All of the teacher-scorers had previous experience in rubric-based scoring of student writing.

The scoring session began by introducing the teacher-scorers to the study—its purpose, design, and the role of the teacher assignment data collection and analysis in the evaluation. Scorers were reminded that they were not evaluating the teachers participating in the study but they were instead coding the assignment for characteristics important to the study. Trainers emphasized to scorers the importance of applying the rubrics according to how they were trained rather than how they think the rubric ought to be applied. Each rubric dimension was then addressed separately. To reach consensus on the reliable application of the rubric, approximately 90 minutes was dedicated to understanding and training using three different sets of anchor and practice papers from the pool of assignments collected for this purpose. Once the trainers were confident that scorers were coding the practice papers with sufficient reliability, the actual scoring process for that rubric was initiated. Batches of assignments were randomly assigned to each of the 12 scorers. Each of the two dimensions scored took approximately 2.5 hours to score. The trainers were available throughout the scoring session to answer scorer questions about the rubric and to provide assistance in deciding on a code or score for a particular assignment. In these instances, the final code or score given to an assignment was the responsibility of the trainer. If a scorer felt that a particular assignment could not be coded or scored because it lacked sufficient information, the scorer notified the lead trainer, who then reviewed the assignment with the scorer and decided its scorability.

Establishment of Interrater Reliability (Agreement Rate)

Scorer agreement rates were computed for each criterion scored. Approximately 25% of all papers (n=144) were independently scored by two different scorers. For Criterion 1, *Alignment of intended writing goals with goals manifested in the assignment task*, agreement rates were computed for (1) individual dichotomous items used to identify the presence of specific individual goals evident in teachers' reported goals and (2) a 4-point Likert item that required scorers to assess the extent to which a teacher's stated goals were manifested in the assignment. The agreement rates for Criterion 1 are shown in Tables B-1 and B-2 respectively. In Table B-1 the agreement rates for the dichotomous items were computed for the scoring of the presence of each specific goal—Rhetorical Decisions, Structure, Conventions, and Processes. Agreement rates were calculated two different ways: *Overall Agreement,* which includes agreements when both scorers did not indicate the presence of a goal as well as when they did, and *Conditional*

Agreement, which only considers agreements and non-agreements when at least one of the scorers indicated the presence of a goal. Overall agreement rates ranged from 73% to 81% while conditional rates ranged from 51% to 68%. Table B-2 shows the agreement rates for the 4-point Likert item. Agreement rates are shown for both Perfect Agreement (51%) and Agreement Within 1 Scoring Category (85%). The latter is the standard way of reporting agreement rates for scoring rubrics of this type. The agreement rates for Criterion 2, *Opportunities for Students to Construct Knowledge in their Written Responses to Assignment Tasks*, a 3-point Likert item, are presented in Table B-3. The agreement rates for Perfect Agreement and Agreement Within 1 Scoring Category were 48% and 94% respectively. Rates for Agreement Within 1 Scoring Category for Criterion 2 are expected to be higher than agreement rates for Criterion 1 because this item had only 3 possible scoring categories compared to 4 for Criterion 1.

Teacher Assignment Reliability Data

Table B-1. Agreement Rates for the Coding of Teacher Reported Writing Goals

	1	2
	Overall Agreement (includes non-codings in the calculation)	**Conditional Agreement (when at least one scorer coded for the goal)**
Rhetorical Decisions	**0.73**	**0.54**
(agreements/total possible agreements)	(105/144)	(45/84)
Structure	**0.76**	**0.68**
(agreements/total possible agreements)	(110/144)	(71/105)
Conventions	**0.90**	**0.58**
(agreements/total possible agreements)	(130/144)	(19/33)
Process	**0.81**	**0.51**
(agreements/total possible agreements)	(117/144)	(24/47)
Average	**0.80**	**0.58**

Note: This is dichotomous data. Scorers were instructed to check all of the types of goals that were evident in teacher reported goals submitted with the assignments.

Table B-2. Agreement Rates for the Scoring of the Alignment Between Intended Goals and Goals Manifested in Assignments (Rubric 1b)

	1	2
	Perfect Agreement	**Agreement Within 1 Scoring Category**
Agreement Rates	**0.51**	**0.85**
(agreements/total possible agreements)	(74/144)	(123/144)

Note: 4-point Likert scale

Table B-3. Agreement Rates for the Scoring of Opportunities for Students to Construct Knowledge in their Written Responses to Assignment Tasks (Rubric 2a)

	1	2
	Perfect Agreement	**Agreement within 1 scale point**
Agreement Rates	**0.48**	**0.94**
(agreements/total possible agreements)	(68/143)	(134/144)

Note: 3-point Likert scale