THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING-INTENSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS OVER TIME

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The New York City Writing Project (NYCWP) is a program of the Institute for Literacy Studies at Lehman College, The City University of New York (CUNY), and is located in the Bronx. The NYCWP is one of the oldest sites of the National Writing Project (NWP), a nationwide network of two hundred university-based professional-development programs dedicated to teacher professionalism and improvement in the teaching of writing. By using writing as the focal point for improving teaching practices and student learning, the NYCWP seeks to build professional communities of teachers and school leaders who promote literacy education as a crucial means of instructional reform. NYCWP teacher-consultants provide weekly on-site assistance to teachers and administrators, as well as after-school graduate seminars or workshops—also held at school sites—on the teaching of writing.

This study is based on a professional-development initiative implemented by the NYCWP from September 1, 2007, through June 30, 2009, in partnership with two small schools in New York City. Northside High School is a newcomer’s school (grades 9–12) with a diverse, multilingual population of 382 students, most of whom immigrated to the United States in the last three years. East River Secondary School (grades 7–12) enrolls 531 students from multiethnic backgrounds; most students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Teachers at both schools were experienced, educated above the mean for similar schools in New York City, and teaching in their areas of certification.

As agents of reform at these two schools, NYCWP teacher-consultants hoped to support collaboration among teachers and school leaders by promoting the use of writing-to-learn activities across the curriculum. As writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) initiatives in college and university settings have made clear, successful outcomes depend on the effective exchange of information and ideas among the stakeholders—teacher-consultants, school faculty, administrators, and students. Previous research had enabled the NYCWP to identify factors that contribute to individual teachers’ effectiveness, as well as promising practices for developing students’ competence in writing. However, these prior studies did not address the degree to which the NYCWP’s professional development supported teachers across content areas to encourage student engagement with the curriculum and improve student-writing performance.

The purpose of the present study was, therefore, to identify ways in which the NYCWP’s involvement with teachers and administrators in two schools contributed to the emergence of a writing-intensive school environment (WISE). Accordingly, this study develops a theoretical framework by drawing on three areas of research: (1) the concept of “writing intensity” drawn
from writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives in postsecondary education; (2) research on professional development; and (3) the literature about the teacher professional community with regard to teacher leadership.

A mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis was employed in these noncomparative case studies. We were especially interested in how school contexts affect professional development aimed at helping educators move along a trajectory—from discernibly different starting points—toward a WISE. The case studies illustrate how differences in school culture and structure shaped the NYCWP’s ways of working, which in turn led to different levels of success in developing opportunities for students to engage in learning through varied and meaningful forms of writing throughout the school day.

One of the contributions of this research is its characterization of the development of a WISE as movement along a trajectory, or fluid continuum. Our findings indicate that a school’s progress on this continuum is affected by several factors: the alignment of the school leadership’s vision with NYCWP intentions, the cohesiveness of the school’s curriculum, and the level of development of the professional community. In particular, our findings suggest that a consistent focus on literacy development across content areas (curricular cohesiveness) cannot be achieved in the absence of a mature professional community. Furthermore, a mature professional community will continue to benefit from professional development aimed at sustaining and enhancing an environment with a high degree of writing intensity, which ultimately affects both teacher practice and student learning outcomes.
INTRODUCTION
The NYCPW is one of the oldest sites of the National Writing Project (NWP), which was established in Berkeley, California, in 1974. The NYCPW is part of a nationwide network of more than two hundred university-based professional-development programs dedicated to teacher professionalism and improvement in the teaching of writing. Located in the Bronx at Lehman College (CUNY), the NYCPW adheres to the nationally-recognized founding principles of the NWP: teachers should write regularly and share their writing; teachers should read and discuss current and seminal scholarship about writing; the best teachers of other teachers are, themselves, teachers. Using writing as the focal point for improving teaching practices and student learning, the NYCPW builds professional communities of teachers and school leaders to promote literacy education as a crucial means of instructional reform.

The primary components of the NYCPW’s approach to professional development are on-site consulting, graduate seminars, study groups (or workshop series), and direct work with administrators, focusing on their educational goals. The NYCPW offers schools, teachers, and administrators a theoretically-grounded approach to professional development, rather than a package, so that teachers can be flexible in applying their strategies to particular subject areas or groups of students.

The NYCPW’s “teachers-teaching-teachers” philosophy recognizes the importance of teacher knowledge, expertise, and leadership. This approach emphasizes situating teachers’ learning in their own writing and classroom practices, rather than developing uniform, extensive curricular materials for teachers or facilitators (Borko 2004). This approach values the experience teachers bring to and from their classrooms and assumes that professional growth is best served when teachers share their knowledge and expertise with each other as peers.

By collaborating with teachers and schools, the NYCPW seeks to transform the ways in which writing is perceived, taught, practiced, and evaluated. Specifically, the NYCPW supports the development of writing-intensive school environments as a reform strategy. This means promoting writing as a tool for learning, thinking, and communicating across grades and subject areas and within particular constituencies such as English language learners, career and technical education, special education, and alternative schools. The NYCPW believes that student writing improves when teachers support and encourage students to write for authentic purposes in a variety of genres; in writing-intensive school environments, teachers use writing in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes to encourage students’ active engagement with the curriculum.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our understanding of the factors that contribute to the creation of a writing-intensive school environment (WISE) continues to evolve. A review of the literature in education and prior NYCWP research shaped the theoretical framework of the present study, which contributes to the discussion about factors that distinguish a WISE, and professional development that best supports it. Our theoretical framework draws on three conceptual antecedents:

1) The idea of writing intensity is drawn from writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives in postsecondary education and the writing-to-learn literature. This study extends the notion of writing intensity from individual classrooms to schools at middle- and high-school levels.

2) The literature about professional development informs the NYCWP’s model of customized on-site professional development.

3) The literature about teacher professional community and school leadership informs our conceptualization of the processes and structures within schools that influence the delivery and outcomes of the NYCWP’s approach to professional development. Change in teaching and learning practices within schools and classrooms can be facilitated or stymied by many factors. We were especially interested in understanding how unique school contexts affect professional development aimed at helping educators move along a trajectory—from discernibly different starting points—toward a WISE.

These three strands of literature helped us to formulate the following definition of a WISE:

In a writing-intensive school environment (WISE), students encounter meaningful and diverse writing across the curriculum, so that they may improve and demonstrate their learning. A mature professional community sustains the focus on literacy across the content areas, the development of teacher-learners, and the renewal of classroom practice.

Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Initiatives

Efforts to infuse writing across disciplines in postsecondary education have generated a body of research about relationships among teaching, learning, and writing (Fulwiler and Young; McCleod and Soven; Bridwell-Bowles, Kuhne, Cullen, Lynch and Olson 1994). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, building on their involvement in the writing-across-the-curriculum movement, a number of colleges and universities began to establish writing-intensive course requirements (Fulwiler and Young; McCleod and Soven; Bridwell-Bowles et al). Establishing a writing requirement for students in a range of subject areas enabled universities to institutionalize their efforts in the writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) movement, define the ways in which discipline-based courses might include writing and, in some cases, establish university writing programs that integrated WAC faculty development. By the 1990s, this robust approach to
writing had been embraced by a range of institutions, both large (e.g., Cornell University and the University of Michigan) and small (e.g., Carleton College, among others).

In 1999, at the end of “the richest decade in WAC history” (Thaiss 2003), CUNY began in earnest a systemwide writing-across-the-curriculum initiative. The CUNY Board of Trustees issued a mandate to “ensure that writing instruction is regarded as a common responsibility and that the development of writing proficiency becomes a focus of the entire undergraduate curriculum” (Board of Trustees Resolution 1999).

Lehman College implemented its “local” version of the CUNY WAC initiative under the leadership of one of the New York City Writing Project (NYCWP) directors, Marcie Wolfe, and faculty in the college’s Department of English. As a result, the NYCWP began to consider re-orienting its approach to professional development in New York City public schools to include concepts of writing-intensive school environments (WISE) as a parallel initiative to work taking place at the college level. The NYCWP began to ask:

- How would teaching and learning in middle and high schools be affected if schools were organized to promote writing-across-the-curriculum and ongoing, schoolwide reflection on the role that writing plays in student progress?
- What policies and practices might support teachers’ work and enable school leaders to meet achievement targets?
- If, as Yood (2004) writes, the third stage of WAC is a “system,” how could school sites move in similar ways?

The NYCWP model of professional development has come to mirror postsecondary educators’ efforts to improve students’ command of subject-area content and writing outcomes through WAC. The important shift in focus from individual classrooms to schoolwide reform advanced the NYCWP’s thinking about professional development. As the national discussion about adolescent literacy focuses on college preparedness, Lehman College/CUNY continues to work toward articulating what it means to write effectively across educational boundaries. The NYCWP’s effort to create writing-intensive school environments—the foundation for the present study—is thus both timely and necessary.

**Writing to Learn**

In its application to middle and high schools, the essential concern of WAC is to help students understand complex disciplinary texts, a prerequisite for academic writing and college preparedness. One of the primary ways for students to build understanding of texts is through informal and expository writing. Viewing writing as more than a skill to be mastered, postsecondary educators frame their intentions in terms of the disciplinary and critical thinking skills that are influenced by the writers’ purposes, ideas about audience, and grasp of conventions (Martin, D’Arcy, Newton, and Parker 1976; Elbow 2002).
Thus, postsecondary educators position writing as a rhetorical activity that requires practice in different contexts over time, reveals disciplinary differences, and functions as a means for students to develop conceptual understanding and engagement in those contexts. Postsecondary educators have developed writing-to-learn activities within the disciplines that are both authentic to and appropriate for the field of inquiry. The appropriateness of writing-to-learn activities for different grade levels has been explored by Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) who point out that higher levels of literacy require more highly-specialized and subject-specific literacy skills that are less easily generalized to all disciplines.

The literature about writing-to-learn provides a link between the positioning of writing in the curriculum and student writing outcomes. Writing is conceptualized as a unique space for learning because it requires the active organization and externalization of personal understandings in a symbolic form (Emig 1977). Moreover, the written record of ideas can be reflected on, revised, shared, or used to trace the evolution of ideas and understanding, provide opportunities for teachers to use formative assessment, foreground student voices, and allow for multiple entry points into academic texts and academic content for students. In this capacity, writing-to-learn activities serve as a primary scaffold for academic writing, which is frequently the measurement for learning outcomes.

By conceptualizing writing as a tool for learning academic content, teachers can facilitate improvement in students’ academic performance by engaging them in writing-to-learn activities around academic content. Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, and Wilkinson (2004), for example, demonstrated consistent positive effects on learning outcomes when teachers from forty-eight schools used writing-to-learn activities throughout a semester. In addition, the researchers found greater increases in student learning when: students spent longer amounts of time per class on writing-to-learn activities; writing-to-learn activities included self-evaluation of students’ understanding of concepts; writing-to-learn activities were grade-level appropriate; the duration of writing-to-learn activities was longer.

Literature on the use of writing within disciplinary courses highlights two primary goals: (1) writing to demonstrate learning, and (2) writing to learn (Martin, D’Arcy, Newton, and Parker 1976; Elbow 2002). WAC initiatives embed both of these goals, distinguishing them by the seriousness of the consequences associated with the written product. Writing to demonstrate learning is most often associated with high-stakes writing, and the written product is usually evaluated for a grade or test score. Because it is judged, high-stakes writing is more formal. Writing-to-learn is less focused on formal writing and a “finished” product. Instead, writing-to-learn activities are designed to help students to think, learn, and understand more about subject matter and to develop ways of expressing their ideas by exploring and experimenting with different kinds of writing through carefully conceived writing assignments. Because they are either graded informally or not graded at all, writing-to-learn assignments are often low-stakes activities.
Formal writing, even high-stakes exams, may be considered writing-to-learn if they are designed to help students to think and learn. Revising a piece of writing, for example, could be designed as a writing-to-learn activity. However, in an era of high-stakes testing, many teachers’ experience with and use of writing in the classroom is limited to the production of formal writing products.

**Professional Development**

Our research defines effective teacher professional development as contributing to both school change and improved student learning outcomes. Changes in teacher practice have been found to directly affect student achievement gains (Darling-Hammond 2009). However, the relationship between student learning and professional development is complex. Gains can result from the effects of improved teaching strategies and more consistent instructional goals, as well as from stronger problem-solving skills within the teacher professional community, all of which can result from effective teacher professional development.

Despite growing understanding of the role that school contexts play in shaping and sustaining teacher growth and change, many approaches to professional development are externally-designed programs that do not take into consideration or engage with the a priori professional community at the school (Lieberman and Miller 1990). For example, many schools hire staff developers to assist teachers with meeting new state mandates or adopting new technology. Embedded professional development, on the other hand, allows a program to be tailored to the current developmental state of a school’s professional community, and views teacher professional development within a school as a key resource for teacher learning. An embedded approach to professional development begins with identifying the areas of greatest student need along with corresponding teacher-learning needs and then focuses teacher professional development on those needs for a sustained period of time, allowing for experimentation with new ways of teaching, shared teaching practices, more cohesive instruction within and across classrooms, and recursive teacher learning—all of which are more likely to result in student achievement gains (Darling-Hammond 2009).

Professional development that effects change is sustained, intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice. To strengthen working relationships among teachers, effective professional development focuses on teaching and learning specific academic content and is often linked with larger school reform initiatives. Some researchers have observed that professional development can serve as a vehicle for reform when teachers, principals, and researchers are engaged in collaborative inquiry about teaching practice (Lieberman and Miller 1990). As a vehicle for reform, teacher professional development “is not only the renewal of teaching, but it is also the renewal of schools—in effect, culture building” (Lieberman and Miller 1990, p. 107).

This means that a highly-developed (mature) professional community will benefit most from professional development that honors teachers’ expertise, provides a space for experimentation and risk taking, and promotes reflection and sharing of teaching practices.
Professional Community

Teacher professional community can be seen as the conduit for change in teacher practice (see Appendix 1). Professional community is a dynamic set of relationships that enables teachers to learn and affect changes in instructional practice through their organization, culture, beliefs and routines. The strength of the relationships between teachers as well as the spread of those relationships across the school can vary. To situate our research within the ongoing conversation about teacher professional community, we used McLaughlin and Talbert’s (2006) stages of professional community to position schools on a continuum toward the development of a mature professional community. The **novice stage** of development is characterized by an inconsistent curriculum, relatively little encouragement for teachers to take risks, and a culture that does not promote trust and or teacher reflection around shared goals for student learning. The **intermediate stage** of development is characterized by collaborative approaches to teaching, a unified but unspecific schoolwide focus on student needs, and a culture where teachers actively but inconsistently share and develop their expertise. The **mature stage** of teacher professional community shows collaborative and consistently reflective teaching practices, a coherent, well-articulated curriculum across all subject areas, and strong student-centered objectives within and across classrooms.

The reality of schools is change. McLaughlin and Talbert’s (2006) useful construct of stages of professional community could be interpreted as reaching a stable end state, but here we understand each stage to be a space of continuous reinvention. Wenger (1998) and Louis, Marks, and Kruse (1996) theorize that professional communities are constantly adapting to changes in the school landscape. Through collaborations with one another, teachers create new opportunities within the professional community that also contribute to its recursive form. The constant renewal of teaching practice in response to change and growth suggests that a writing-intensive school environment, as an outcome of professional development, is a fluid idea. A mature professional community will continue to benefit from professional development that is aimed at maintaining such an environment in the midst of constant change.

Coburn and Stein (2006) argue that learning occurs through teacher participation in social and cultural activities within their school communities. Along with McLaughlin and Talbert (2006), they show that teachers are more likely to make changes in instructional practice when their school community is collaborative and exhibits collective responsibility for shared goals and student learning. The well-developed notion of community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) similarly sees change as dependent upon social structures within schools, but suggests that such communities can occur in any place teachers form relationships with one another. Communities of practice can develop within a formal school structure or as networks of informal relationships that are not congruent with formal organizational structures. Whereas professional community subgroups are usually developed within disciplines or grade levels with the support of the administration, in schools where the leadership does not create the structures necessary for schoolwide learning, some teachers seek out others with similar pedagogy, thus developing small, informal professional communities within the school (Coburn 2001).
However, informal professional communities are not sufficient to generate schoolwide changes in practice and policy. Structured conversations between diverse groups of teachers are needed to engage teachers in reflection and in the development of shared goals and responsibilities (Coburn 2001). In contrast, teachers who are largely isolated in their classroom without sustained interactions with other teachers throughout the day are not likely to experience these benefits, even in the presence of ongoing professional development (Darling-Hammond 2009). Supportive school leadership is indispensable to achieving schoolwide professional community. Researchers have found that in addition to allocating learning resources for teachers, effective principals promote the development of teacher-learning communities by generating support for teacher collaboration, unifying instructional foci, and facilitating transitions between stages of community development (McLaughlin and Talbert 2006). The principal plays an integral role in the development and maintenance of teachers’ professional community. Not only does supportive school leadership function as the “keeper of the vision,” but it also encourages risk-taking, innovation and learning among teachers, honors the expertise of teachers, shares the work of providing feedback on instructional performance, and creates opportunities that support individual growth and the development of collective knowledge and skills (Louis, Marks, and Kruse 1996, pp. 762–3).

Summary
A fundamental characteristic of WISE is writing intensity, the degree of opportunity students have throughout their school day to engage in learning through varied and meaningful forms of writing. Writing intensity is a concept drawn from writing-across-the-curriculum initiatives in postsecondary classrooms and here applied to whole schools at the secondary level. As shown in Figure 1, we conceptualize writing intensity on a continuum from a low to high degree of opportunity.

Curricular cohesiveness, the schoolwide focus on meeting students’ needs by using writing to learn academic content and demonstrate learning, is also a component of a WISE. A high level of curricular cohesiveness across content areas enables embedded professional development to support teachers throughout a school so that they can create frequent and sustained use of writing-to-learn activities. A low level of curricular cohesiveness, conversely, prevents the NYCWP from supporting teachers across disciplines in using writing to teach academic content. The literature about professional development informed the NYCWP’s model of customized on-site professional development.

The third characteristic of WISE is professional community. A mature professional community sustains the development of teacher-learners, which enables the renewal of classroom practice through the commitment of resources, honoring teacher knowledge and experience, and democratic leadership. A novice professional community does not encourage teachers to take risks, form teacher networks focused on learning from each other, or dedicate resources to teacher learning. The literature about teacher professional community and school leadership informed our conceptualization of the factors affecting change in teaching practice.
Although the characteristics of a WISE have been described discretely, we conceptualize each as an interconnected continuum such that the focus on literacy across the content areas (curricular cohesiveness) could not be achieved in the absence of a mature professional community or realized without enacting high writing intensity in a school. Conceptualizing the characteristics of a WISE along these continua has been helpful in our research because we were interested in understanding how unique school contexts affect professional development that is aimed at helping educators move along a trajectory—from discernibly different starting points—toward a WISE.

Figure 1. Characteristics of a WISE
THE PRESENT STUDY
The present study is a two-year consecutive and longitudinal investigation of the NYCWP’s impact on the teachers and students of two public high schools in New York City. Research completed during two school years 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 indicated that NYCWP on-site professional development co-occurred with positive changes in teachers’ instructional practices and in student writing, particularly among English language learners. Importantly, teachers who provided instruction in subject areas other than English language arts successfully incorporated writing into their instructional practices.

This report presents the findings of the two-year longitudinal study initiated in September 2007. The current study assesses progress toward establishing writing-intensive school environments (WISE) in two small schools for the period, September 1, 2007, through June 30, 2009. Table 1 presents student profile data in the two school research sites. Data are nearly identical across both school years; we, therefore, present descriptive data from only our baseline year. Northside High School is a newcomer’s high school (grades 9–12) with a diverse, multilingual student population of 382 students, the majority having immigrated to the United States within the last three years. Eastriver Secondary School enrolled 531 students from multiethnic backgrounds in grades 7–12, most eligible for free school lunch. In both schools, more students pass standardized exams than the New York City average for schools who serve similar student populations.

Table 1. Student descriptive statistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Northside High School</th>
<th>Eastriver Secondary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade levels served</td>
<td>9–12</td>
<td>7–12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School poverty rate¹</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent immigrants²</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School Regents pass rate³</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language arts</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global history</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. history and government</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade 8 Regents pass rate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language arts</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Defined as eligible for free or reduced lunch.
² Defined as students who immigrated to the United States within the last three years.
³ For a Regents diploma in New Y State, 65 or above is passing; 3 or 4 indicates proficiency in Grade 8 Regents.
Table 2 describes the faculty of each school research site. Teachers at both schools were experienced and educated above the mean for similar schools in New York City. Turnover in both schools was minimal, enabling us to present descriptive data from only our baseline year. Both schools had a majority of experienced staff teaching in their area of certification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher characteristic</th>
<th>Northside High School (n=24)</th>
<th>Eastriver Secondary School (n=35)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years teaching experience</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching without certification</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching out of certification</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree or higher</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous research enabled the NYCWP to identify factors that contribute to individual teachers’ effectiveness and promising practices for developing students’ competence in writing across content areas. These research initiatives did not address the degree to which the NYCWP’s exemplary professional development supported teachers across the curriculum in using writing in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes to encourage students’ active engagement with the curriculum and, therefore, improve student-writing performance and student learning outcomes. The present study was implemented specifically to identify ways in which the NYCWP’s involvement with teaching and administrative staff in two schools contributed to the emergence of a writing-intensive school environment (WISE).

The Local Context
New York City’s public school system is complex. It is made up of 1,600 schools, 1.1 million students, and 95,000 teachers. The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) has been reorganized three times between 2000 and 2008, moving from a decentralized system of thirty-two community school districts to a consolidated structure of ten regions. In that time, more than two hundred new schools have been added, primarily small schools serving grades 6–12 or 9–12. Each shift in the NYCDOE has changed schools’ options for professional development, thereby limiting consistency in professional development services over time. In keeping with New York City’s focus on small secondary schools, both school research sites are small schools that opted to participate in the Empowerment School Support Organization, which allowed principals a high degree of autonomy in selecting professional development for their school.

The principal of Northside High School is an experienced administrator who has led the school since its founding five years ago. Based on a previous positive relationship with the NYCWP, Northside High School’s principal arranged to implement NYCWP professional development at his school beginning in September 2007. The principal of Eastriver Secondary School, who had
been leading the school since 2005–2006 sought to implement NYCWP professional development based on the recommendation of a Parent Coordinator in September 2006. Thus, when research began in the fall of 2007, the NYCWP had established relationships of more than one year with each school’s administration, and in the case of Eastriver Secondary School, the NYCWP had produced evidence of progress over a year. The NYCWP initiated work in both schools as the sole provider of literacy-focused professional development.

NYCWP’s Approach to Professional Development
The NYCWP works with teachers to support schoolwide literacy goals in curriculum and instruction. Site-specific program content is developed by first learning about each school’s priorities and by shaping the work in the school to meet the needs of the students and teachers. Working in schools alongside teachers, teacher-consultants (TCs) facilitate professional growth through flexible program content. The degree to which teachers engage with various forms of support differs by school, teachers’ needs, teachers’ perceptions of students’ needs, and a teacher-consultant’s insights into what forms of support are most likely to be effective.

The consultants offered daily, weekly, and sustained low-frequency consultations to teachers and after-school workshop series. Though the NYCWP’s on-site consulting is the centerpiece of its in-service professional-development model, workshop series offer teachers flexibility to extend their own professional development and are designed to mutually reinforce teachers’ individual consultations with a teacher-consultant. Table 3 provides an overview of the in-school program content at each school over two years. Monica, a NYCWP consultant with experience in small-school settings, worked with the twenty-four teachers and administrative staff at Northside High School four days a week. Steve, a NYCWP consultant with experience teaching and coaching in traditional urban school settings, provided on-site support two days each week at Eastriver Secondary School.

Table 3. Summary of 2007–2009 in-school program content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Series</th>
<th>Northside High School</th>
<th>Eastriver Secondary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007: n/a</td>
<td>Fall 2007: 10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2008: 10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
<td>Enrollment: 7 teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment: 6 teachers</td>
<td>Spring 2008: 10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008: n/a</td>
<td>Fall 2008: 10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2009: 6 sessions for 5 hours each</td>
<td>Enrollment: 8 teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment: 9 teachers</td>
<td>Spring 2009: 10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment: 7 teachers</td>
<td>Enrollment: 7 teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 days/week: 1,008 activity hours</td>
<td>4 days/week: 1,080 activity hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Teacher Participants: 13</td>
<td>Total Teacher Participants: 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Teachers Daily*</td>
<td>2 Teachers Daily*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Teachers Weekly**</td>
<td>4 Teachers Weekly**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Teachers Sustained Low-frequency***</td>
<td>3 Teachers Sustained Low-frequency***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Daily consults = 2 or more meetings/week, Weekly consults = 1 meeting most weeks, Sustained low-frequency consults = several meetings during the year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development planning committee: 18 program hours</td>
<td>2 full-staff professional development: 10 program hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 full-staff professional development: 4 program hours</td>
<td>2 full-staff professional development: 2 program hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biweekly full-staff professional development: 20 program hours</td>
<td>1 full-staff professional development: 2 program hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development planning committee: 10 program hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-school professional development events: 2 program hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolwide events: 12 program hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other committees: 10 program hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESEARCH QUESTIONS, DESIGN, METHODS, AND ANALYSIS

Research Questions
The current study addresses the following research questions:

- What is a writing-intensive school environment?
- How did the NYCWP support the development of a writing-intensive school environment at different stages of professional community over time?
- What indicators of progress did schools demonstrate toward creating writing-intensive school environments over time?
  a. To what extent did NYCWP teacher-consultants and school teaching and administrative staff develop common goals over time?
  b. To what extent did coherent literacy practices become evident across content areas in each school?
  c. Did teachers identify changes in the schoolwide conceptualization and practice of literacy over time?
- Did change occur in students’ attitudes about writing, self-concept as writers, or experiences with writing over two years?
- To what extent did teacher involvement with NYCWP on-site professional development relate to observed changes in student writing outcomes on timed exams and to student attitudes about writing?
- Did teacher involvement with NYCWP on-site professional development effect change in classroom practice?
- How did teacher involvement with NYCWP on-site professional development help build a professional community over time? because they are either graded informally or not graded at all.

Logic Model
Our logic model (presented in Appendix 1) captures, in visual form, the relationships at work in the creation of writing-intensive school environments.

Design and Methods
A mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis was employed to answer the research questions. Noncomparative case studies that highlight the scope of the NYCWP’s work within unique school contexts were developed. A case study approach allowed us to utilize multiple sources of data to better highlight the role of school context in the work of the NYCWP (Yin 2003). Because teachers engage with NYCWP professional development in different ways and to different degrees, individual comparative analyses were employed so that each teacher
and student can act as his/her own control. Measures were collected from teachers and students twice in 2007–2008 and twice in 2008–2009, in the beginning of the year (time 1, time 3) and again after teachers and students had completed a year of work with the NYCWP (time 2, time 4).

The following methods were employed in data collection:

- Teacher-consultants, teachers, and administrative informants were interviewed at least once during the spring semester of the 2007–2008 academic year and again in 2008–2009. Observations of teachers in classrooms preceded teacher interviews. Teacher-consultant interviews were conducted at several times throughout the year and were accompanied by teacher-consultant logs and artifacts (including student work and lesson plans) to contextualize the conversations. More than 33 percent of all teachers were interviewed at each school.
- Records of each teacher-consultant’s activities within the school, including consultations with administrators and teachers, were examined to determine the extent to which teachers participated in NYCWP professional development.
- A teacher survey was administered to all teachers at each school during the last schoolwide professional-development opportunity in 2007–2008 and in 2008–2009.
- Focus groups were conducted in 2008–2009 with eight teachers in each school from multiple subject areas to better understand conceptions of literacy and how to teach literacy.
- At least five school visits per school were documented each year.
- A survey on student attitudes toward writing was administered at the beginning and end of both academic years.
- Students were given on-demand writing prompts at the beginning and end of each academic year.

Data Management

In order to maximize the usefulness of this research for all stakeholders, the measures used to assess the NYCWP’s progress in creating writing-intensive environments at Northside High School and Eastriver Secondary School were developed in consultation with NYCWP teacher-consultants, school principals, and the local LSRI advisory group. Student data were collected at the school site by the teacher-consultant and the independent researcher. Digital recordings of interviews were transcribed by a research assistant trained by the independent researcher. The researcher also conducted interviews, reviewed transcripts, and made corrections to the transcripts. Student survey data were entered by a research assistant. Student writing samples were scored at an LSRI annual scoring conference (see below). All statistical procedures were run using SPSS/PASW 18 software.

Measures

- Teacher participation in NYCWP professional development. Teacher participation was calculated within subject areas and schools based on teachers’ self-reported responses to
the teacher survey. These data were cross-validated with teacher-consultant records of meetings with teachers.

- **Focal teacher interactions with teacher-consultants.** Thematic analysis of interviews with teachers, administrators, and teacher-consultants was used to describe the scope and nature of focal teachers’ interactions with teacher-consultants. Classroom observations, teacher-consultant records, and artifacts were used to triangulate these data.

- **School context.** School report card data; interviews with teachers, principals, and the teacher-consultant; and school observations were used to describe some of the culture and structures of each school.

- **Student attitudes toward writing.** Students’ writing self-concept, attitudes toward writing, and experiences with writing were assessed by self-report at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the school year. Scales were conceptually derived from the Student Writing Survey (Daly and Miller 1975). Confirmatory factor analysis was used to ascertain scale reliability. Surveys containing all three measures were administered to students in class to assess:
  
  a. **Writing self-concept.** Students were asked to respond on a four-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree) to the statements: (1) I think I’m a good writer; (2) Other kids in my class think I’m a good writer; (3) There are people in my family who think I’m a good writer; (4) My teacher thinks I’m a good writer. These four items were combined as the student writing self-concept scale ranging from one to four points in which a higher score indicates a more positive writing self concept. This scale had high reliability (alpha coefficient = .85).

  b. **Student attitudes toward writing.** Students were asked to respond on a four-point scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree) to the statements: (1) Writing is a way to express myself; (2) Writing is a way to understand my feelings; (3) Writing is a way to help me understand my thinking; (4) Writing is a way to share my ideas; (5) I really like writing. These five items were combined as the student writing self-concept scale ranging from one to four points in which a higher score indicates a more positive attitudes toward writing. This scale had high reliability (alpha coefficient = .88).

  c. **Experiences with writing.** Students were asked to respond on a four-point scale (1=Never, 2=Monthly, 3=Weekly, 4=Daily) to the statements: (1) I write about topics I choose; (2) I revise and edit my writing; (3) I discuss my writing with my teacher; (4) I use prewriting skills like brainstorming, listing, mapping or outlining; (5) I save my writing; (6) I use writing in other subject areas. These five items were combined as the student writing self-concept scale ranging from one to four points in which a higher score indicates more frequent experiences with writing. This scale had high reliability (alpha coefficient = .81).

  d. **Student writing outcomes.** Writing prompts derived from the National Writing Project’s archive were administered to students at the beginning and end of
the school year. For each administration, students had forty minutes to respond to the prompt. To ensure technical rigor and credibility, scoring and data processing were conducted at a national scoring conference, independent of local sites involved in the research. The scoring applied the NWP Analytic Writing Continuum, a writing assessment system based upon the framework of the Six+1 Traits writing model (Kozlow and Bellamy 2004). The Analytic Writing Continuum, which includes refined and clarified definitions of the constructs measured as well as anchors, scoring commentaries, training and calibration processes, assesses the following attributes of writing:

i. Content (including quality and clarity of ideas and meaning)—The content category describes how effectively the writing establishes and maintains a focus, selects and integrates ideas related to content (i.e., information, events, emotions, opinions, and perspectives) and includes evidence, details, reasons, anecdotes, examples, descriptions, and characteristics to support, develop, and/or illustrate ideas.

ii. Structure—The structure category describes how effectively the writing establishes logical arrangement, coherence, and unity within the elements of the work and throughout the work as a whole.

iii. Stance—The stance category describes how effectively the writing communicates a perspective through an appropriate level of formality, elements of style, and tone appropriate for the audience and purpose.

iv. Sentence Fluency—The sentence fluency category describes how effectively the sentences are crafted to serve the intent of the writing, in terms of rhetorical purpose, rhythm, and flow.

v. Diction—The diction category describes the precision and appropriateness of the words and expressions for the writing task and how effectively they create imagery, provide mental pictures, or convey feelings and ideas.

vi. Conventions—The conventions category describes how effectively the writing demonstrates age-appropriate control of usage, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing.

A national panel of experts on student writing, along with senior NWP researchers, determined the Six+1 Trait model, while sufficiently comprehensive, required extensive modifications to make it more appropriate for use in research studies. The following modifications were implemented in the NWP Analytic Writing Continuum prior to the scoring conference:

- The scale of the rubric was extended from four to six points in order to ensure sufficient discrimination and therefore to allow increased sensitivity to any changes that might be observed.
- The language defining the attributes was clarified to enhance the reliability of evaluative judgments.
• The evaluative judgments were modified to focus exclusively upon the student writing (where, on occasion, the rubric previously included references to the reader’s reactions or to the writer’s personality as the basis for judgment).
• Particular traits—notably Content (including quality and clarity of ideas and meaning), Structure, and Stance—underwent considerable revision in order to bring conceptual coherence to the constructs and thereby to enhance the reliability and validity of the scores relevant to those constructs.
• National anchor papers, detailed scoring commentaries, and extensive training and calibration procedures were developed to ensure not only the technical rigor of the system but also that the performance standards implicit in the system were sufficiently and appropriately high.

Scoring
The NYCWP writing samples were among those from eight LSRI sites scored at a national conference held in June 2009. Student writing was coded, with identifying information removed so that scorers could not know any specifics of the writing sample being evaluated (e.g., site of origin, group [program or comparison], or time of administration [pretest or posttest]). Of the 7,821 papers—which included all of the student samples reported in this research project, 1,023 (13 percent) were scored twice so that reliability could be calculated.

The scorers participated in six hours of training at the beginning of the conference. Their scoring was calibrated to a criterion level of performance at that time and was then recalibrated following every major break in the scoring (meals and overnight). Reliabilities examined by attribute across grade levels (measured as interrater agreement, defining agreement as two scores being identical or within one single score point of each other) ranged from 86 to 92 percent with an aggregate across all scores of 89 percent. All data were entered via optical scanning with built-in checks for acceptable score ranges and the like. The resolution of all discrepancies and adjudication of disagreements within the double-scored set of papers produced a highly accurate data file for use in our analysis.

Table 4. Reliability rates for writing scores by analytic attribute (across all grade levels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number Scored</th>
<th>Double Scored Rate</th>
<th>All Elements</th>
<th>Holistic</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Stance</th>
<th>Sentence Fluency</th>
<th>Diction</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7,821</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis
Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis were employed in the current study. Appendix 2 shows how data collection and analysis were used to answer our research questions. Interview transcripts were thematically coded by the independent researcher. The research team and stakeholders, including program staff, reviewed coding for validity. The researcher then systematized codes in Atlas Ti and used this database to refine thematic codes, pool representative quotes, and produce frequency counts for each code. The inductively generated thematic categories often overlapped and axial coding is outlined in Appendix 3. Various forms
of quantitative analysis were used to assess the NYCWP’s progress toward creating WISE at Northside High School and Eastriver Secondary School:

- **Teacher participation with NYCWP** (see Appendix 4). Teacher participation with the NYCWP was calculated within subject areas and schools and based on teachers’ self-reported responses to the teacher survey. These data were cross-validated with teacher-consultant records of meetings with teachers.

- **Teacher interactions with teacher-consultants**. Thematic analysis of interviews with teachers, administrators, and teacher-consultants was used to describe the scope and nature of focal teachers’ interactions with teacher-consultants. Classroom observations, teacher-consultant records, and artifacts triangulated qualitative analysis. The extent of change in teacher practices was assessed through the linked classroom-observation data and teacher-interview data.

- **Teacher perceptions of literacy**. Thematic analysis of focus groups with teachers from across the curriculum was used to describe teachers’ perceptions of literacy within schools. These data were cross-validated with teacher-observation and interview-data.

- **Student attitudes toward writing** (see Appendix 5). Change in students’ attitudes toward writing, students’ self-concept as writers, and students’ experiences with writing were compared between the beginning and end of each school year. Paired t-tests were used to establish whether students demonstrated significant change in scores from time 1 to time 2, and from time 3 to time 4.

- **Student-writing outcomes**. Differences between baseline student writing prompt scores and the follow-up each year were measured on six specific individual elements of writing (content, structure, stance, sentence fluency, diction, and conventions) and a holistic score. Paired t-tests were used to establish whether students demonstrated significant change in scores from time 1 to time 2, and from time 3 to time 4. Writing development over time was examined using repeated measures analysis of variance. Longitudinal analyses were conducted with a sub-set of the sample from each school who had three data points including time 1, time 2, and time 4.

- **School context**. Case studies of each school highlight the unique school context. School report card data, interviews with teachers, the principal, and the teacher consultant, and school observations were used to describe relevant constructs within the school context that have supported or, conversely, stymied the NYCWP’s progress toward the creation of writing-intensive school environments.

Table 5 summarizes data collected from both school research sites during the current study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Northside High School</td>
<td>Eastriver School</td>
<td>Northside High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher interviews</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classroom observations  & 11 & 9 & 14 & 10 \\
Student surveys & 92 & 88 & 91 & 161 \\
On-demand student writing & 92 & 88 & 91 & 161 \\
Teacher surveys & 23 & 8 & 25 & 32 \\
Principal interviews & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\
TC interviews & 3 & 4 & 5 & 1 \\
TC logs & 1 & 1 & 1 & 4 \\
Principal interviews & 1 & 1 & 1 & 1 \\
Focus groups & n/a & n/a & 1 & 1 \\
School visits** & 16 & 12 & 10 & 11 \\

*Note: both pre- and post-
**Note: number of visits, each including field notes and artifacts

Findings
The two case studies presented below include the perspectives of teachers, administrators, students, and professional-development staff. Both case studies employ qualitative and quantitative data analysis, as described in the preceding section. The case studies have been constructed to highlight how NYCWP partnerships with schools can improve teacher practice and student outcomes, using three lenses to answer the research questions. Each of the following case studies is structured around these three lenses:

The School
- We focus on identifying the elements and structures within the school community that defined the NYCWP’s approach to professional development.
- We describe the use of writing within subject areas and across the curriculum, in relation to important school structures that shaped the outcomes of NYCWP professional development.
- We related the schoolwide positioning of writing in the curriculum to quantitative measures of students’ experiences with writing in the school, student’s attitudes toward writing, and their self-concept as writers.

The Teacher-consultant
- The second lens utilizes the teacher-consultant’s perspective to elaborate the linkage between school-level and classroom-level change as each school community collaborated with the NYCWP in developing a WISE. Because teachers’ perceptions of the outcomes of participating in NYCWP professional development inform the teacher-consultant’s work in the school site, they are also presented here.

The Classroom
- The case studies describe interactions within classrooms (linking classroom observations and teacher interview data) and relate classroom practices to student outcomes.
CASE STUDY 1
NORTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN CONTEXT
As a member of the Internationals Network for Public Schools in New York and California, Northside High School, located in residential Queens, is a small high school designed to serve English language learners (ELLs) exclusively. The school’s newcomer, immigrant students come from thirty-three different countries, speak twenty different languages, and have wide-ranging educational backgrounds. Nearly all students in grades 9–12 are minority students from low-income families and have limited proficiency in English (see Table 1).

On a typical day at the school, student voices can be heard from nearly every classroom. A May 20, 2008, visit to the school revealed groups of ninth and tenth grade students in art class painting murals that integrated myths from their diverse cultural backgrounds. Down the hall, pairs of twelfth grade students in a mathematics class worked in pairs on a study guide for the Regents Math A Exam. In preparation for an upcoming gallery show, ninth and tenth grade English language arts students were presenting their video animations about the immigrant experience. In a humanities classroom, eleventh-graders taught each other units about post-industrial society using PowerPoint presentations, note taking, and questioning activities. Throughout the school, students showed respect to each other, genuine rapport with teachers and staff, and comfort in explaining their ongoing projects to us. When students changed classes, boisterous conversation in several languages ensued. During the day, the principal was observed frequently checking in with students, teachers, and staff and meeting with parents.

In contrast to traditional “leveled” classrooms in which students are grouped according to English proficiency levels, classrooms at Northside are structured to take advantage of student diversity. When asked to describe their school, all nine teachers interviewed named the following attributes: heterogeneous grouping; small groups; project-based learning; differentiated, cross-disciplinary curriculum. Most teachers explicitly defined these characteristics as ways to meet the needs of the entirely-ELL student body. For example, a humanities teacher connected student needs to project-based teaching, saying,

*The strongest attribute at our school is that we are able to get students so interested and involved. They develop their language [skills] because they want to succeed at whatever the project is—not because of grades, but more because of interest.*

All teachers mentioned project-based learning as a defining characteristic of Northside High School. For some teachers, project-based learning entailed developing close relationships with other teachers and/or with students. A math teacher gave the following description:

*I really fell in love when I came here because it’s a project-based school . . . we work in groups every day . . . we have so much respect for the students. That’s why the students also respect us. It’s a very close relationship.*

The descriptions offered by school staff differentiate their school from traditional schools. The principal observed that:
One of the things that is most bizarre about what we do is the heterogeneity because it goes against everything that everybody else says about what you’re supposed to do with ELLs.

Several teachers reported that English language learners at Northside pass Regents exams at a higher rate than the city-wide average for native-English speakers. At the same time, eight of the nine teachers interviewed at this school felt pressured to help students pass the Regents exams (standardized New York State exams). A humanities teacher reported:

- It’s not a traditional high school where the teacher lectures all the time or you just take notes.
- And at the same time, as twelfth grade teachers, we feel a lot of pressure with the Regents.

THE SCHOOL: TEACHERS AS LEARNERS IN A DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY
The New York City Writing Project (NYCWP) entered Northside High School in September 2007. Teachers and school administrators had decided that students needed to focus on writing and that teachers needed support to better learn how to address this need. The alignment of the school community’s goals for teachers and students provided a foundation for productive collaboration. The principal articulated the fit between NYCWP’s approach to professional development and the school community in 2008:

- I think [the NYCWP] is more of a way of looking at your work, and I think it is a broad set of ideas about approaching writing and literacy that you could apply to any context. But I think it works well in our school because the focus is on writing and language development. Everybody is a language teacher here.

To learn about the existing professional community and the school’s culture, Monica, the NYCWP teacher-consultant (TC), focused on building relationships with teachers and administrators during the first year of her work on site. Although teachers at Northside High School were already incorporating reading and writing across the curriculum, the principal and the teachers sought professional development to better meet the needs of their students. To promote experimentation, sharing, and teacher learning, the teacher-consultant oriented teacher professional development (PD) to address teacher-defined needs throughout the year.

During the 2008–2009 school year, the school intensified its focus on developing student literacy. In addition to providing resources for teachers, the principal also unified the school’s instructional focus on student literacy. The goals for professional development were to

- strengthen professional community through teacher-defined professional development aimed at improving teachers’ competence with literacy-based instructional objectives
- facilitate the exchange and adaptation of literacy practices between teachers
- support development of cohesive approaches to literacy-based instruction within and across classrooms
- encourage experimentation with new ways of teaching, including the use of technologies that were unfamiliar to teachers
- implement the principal’s vision for coherent, literacy-based classroom practice as a process for schoolwide development.
As the instructional leader of Northside High School, the principal wanted teacher development during 2008–2009 to concentrate on supporting student-writing development in consistent ways across the curriculum. The principal reflected on the priorities for schoolwide professional development:

At the beginning of the year I said, “As a school, instructionally, this is our main goal this year through professional development” . . . And this is the one particular area that most obviously cuts across all the boundaries of disciplines—everyone needs to learn how to write.

The principal articulated the need for increased coherence in literacy-based classroom practices across content areas, and devoted resources to develop these practices.

**Professional Community and Curricular Cohesiveness**

During the 2007–2008 school year, Monica encountered an a priori intermediate professional community at Northside High School. Teachers collaborated within teams, utilized project-based learning to meet students’ needs, and used portfolios and other forms of reflective self-assessment with students (McLaughlin and Talbert 2006). During 2008–2009, her second year at Northside, Monica worked with teachers and staff to move the community from an intermediate to a mature level of professional community by helping teachers adapt writing-to-learn practices to their content area and to have a conversation about those practices throughout the school. The mature stage of teacher professional community showed collaborative and consistently reflective teaching practices around literacy and that a coherent, well-articulated focus on writing had developed across all subject areas, demonstrating strong student-centered objectives within classrooms (McLaughlin and Talbert 2006).

Table 6 documents teacher participation in different forms of on-site professional development offered by the teacher-consultant at Northside. In 2008–2009, newer teachers were less likely to engage in consultations or workshops than more-experienced teachers. Notably, all teachers worked with the teacher-consultant throughout the year in schoolwide professional development. Thus, all teachers received a minimum level of support in the form of time spent in professional development with teachers from across the curriculum. The majority of teachers in the school also consulted with the teacher-consultant individually and attended a workshop series. Because a WISE is defined by frequent encounters with writing across the curriculum, it is important to note that two-thirds of the ELA teachers consulted “moderately or frequently” with the teacher-consultant and nearly one-third of teachers in other subject areas did so; half of these non-ELA teachers also participated in a workshop series.
Table 6. Teacher participation by characteristic in 2008–2009 (n=24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Percent of Teachers within Row Total</th>
<th>Consulted moderately or frequently with TC</th>
<th>Attended at least 1 workshop</th>
<th>Attended at least 1 schoolwide PD led by TC *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years or less</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years or more</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in school:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years or less</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years or more</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades taught*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th – 10th</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th – 12th</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject area taught:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA**</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-ELA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher education:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed. masters or higher*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Teacher holds a masters degree in education or additional credit hours

**Note: Teachers who self-identified as ELA on survey

At Northside High School, professional communities had formed within discipline groups, grade-level teams, and at the level of the whole school. Interdisciplinary grade-level teams served as the central unit of the school and supported teacher collaboration for purposes of developing student skills and concepts across disciplines. A biology teacher explained:

*We have teams of kids . . . so the students are all together, and they work with the same group of core teachers. So I work with one ESL teacher, one history teacher, one math teacher, and one art teacher [. . .] And because we are seeing the same kids, it also facilitates interdisciplinary project development. So at a couple of different points in the year, we consciously link up and create projects that transcend any one or two or three of the disciplines.*

Professional communities in this school paralleled formal school structures. The principal supported teacher learning communities by allocating substantial planning time and resources to grade-level teams and more limited time to discipline groups. Although teachers worked most frequently within their grade-level team, some disciplinary groups managed to meet each week; however not all teachers sought support from their disciplinary group.
Table 7 displays the percentage of teachers interviewed who had observed at least one other teacher’s classroom, talked with at least one teacher about ideas and strategies for teaching, and discussed curriculum with at least one teacher during the year. All of the nine teachers interviewed had discussed teaching content and curriculum with another teacher at their school, and every teacher at Northside had engaged in at least one interclassroom visitation with a peer. However, according to the teachers we spoke to, fewer had reached out to peers beyond their grade-level team, and very few had discussed curriculum or practice with teachers who were neither in their discipline nor on their grade-level team.

### Table 7. Teacher professional support networks in 2008–2009 (n=9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This year, who have you . . .</th>
<th>No teachers</th>
<th>At least 1 teacher on your grade-level team</th>
<th>At least 1 teacher in your subject/discipline</th>
<th>At least 1 other teacher *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. . . visited or has visited you to see teaching practice?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . discussed content, teaching strategies and ideas with?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . discussed curriculum and links to other class’s curriculum with?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: A teacher at your school who is not on your grade-level team nor in your discipline

School leadership was indispensible to achieving a mature schoolwide professional community capable of supporting changes in teacher practice. The principal encouraged risk taking, innovation, and continual learning among teachers. By allowing teachers to plan the schoolwide professional development, the principal honored teachers’ expertise and created opportunities for both individual growth and the development of collective knowledge and skills. Seven of nine teachers interviewed in 2008–2009 described themselves as “learners” and discussed ways in which they had benefited from sharing practices with other teachers and the teacher-consultant.

All teacher participants described work they had done within their team to strengthen collaborative and reflective literacy-based teaching practices over two years.
Although teachers were focused on students and curriculum development within teams, and worked to articulate literacy objectives in their classrooms during 2007–2008, the explicit focus on developing coherent literacy practices across the curriculum emerged during the NYCWP’s second year at Northside. During 2008–2009, a WISE became visible as teachers were able to discuss why and how writing was being used. The conversation focused on using low-stakes writing to support critical thinking, academic writing, and learning disciplinary content, moving toward high curricular cohesiveness.

Thus, shifting from an intermediate professional community toward a mature professional community co-occurred with increased visibility of the curricular focus on using writing-to-learn, or curricular cohesiveness. Teachers were conscious of the change. In 2007–2008 the NYCWP was viewed by the school community as a resource to support teachers in using writing in their classrooms not only by those who participated directly but also by those who did not. That year, the biology teacher on a ninth–tenth grade team described Monica’s approach to professional development within the team structure of the school as a having a “ripple effect”:

> I have noticed this ripple effect with things. She will say something, we will do something together, and then I notice that it extends outward because everybody is working in tight-knit relationships with each other . . . And so something that I do as a consequence of a conversation I have with Monica will often end up in [my colleague’s] class . . . Work that is happening in one place is not happening in isolation because every class is connected to everybody else . . .

During 2008–2009, shared literacy practices were becoming visible throughout the school. The biology teacher found that text annotation was a common practice within his team. He described a common vocabulary for referring to writing practices across the curriculum:

> Having that common vocabulary . . . everybody [on the team] talking about evidence was really important for the kids—the nature of the evidence is different, but we’re all referring to evidence as a thing that tells you how you know what you know.

The biology teacher’s reflections demonstrate movement toward a stronger professional community as well as greater curricular cohesiveness within a grade-level team.

### Raising Teacher Awareness of Low-stakes Writing

Before the NYCWP entered Northside High School, teachers utilized project-based experiential learning in conjunction with portfolio assessments. Staff and students were already familiar with “writing-to-learn” and were committed to having students reflect on their own learning. However, teachers were conscious of a need to better support their students in learning to read and write with academic texts. In 2007–2008, the NYCWP professional development took the form of defining these objectives and expanding the use of writing-to-learn strategies such as adaptations of literature circles and authentic-learning journals. The principal explained:
[Teachers at Northside] understand that you have to scaffold work. They understand that you need to think consciously about what the language structures are that go into the work you are doing. That is a given. I think we are ready to push past that.

In 2007–2008, many non-ELA teachers brought writing into their classrooms. Several teachers explained that through working with the teacher-consultant, math and science teachers had embraced writing-to-learn strategies to help their students access discipline content. A humanities teacher noted that it became clear to nonhumanities teachers that writing was not an auxiliary activity but a vital factor in supporting learning goals for students:

[The TC] has been able to find ways to say to math and science people, “Here’s how this will help your class, and here’s how this can be done,” whether it’s a skill set across the curriculum or across disciplines.

The next year, 2008–2009, Monica worked to elevate the use of writing to a more purposeful position in classrooms, including classrooms where teachers had been less knowledgeable about incorporating writing into their class the previous year. All of the teachers who were interviewed in 2008–2009 noticed the shift toward a schoolwide responsibility for student writing development. One humanities teacher reported that she felt supported by her peers in student literacy development for the first time in her teaching career. Movement toward a shared understanding of how and why to use writing to support student learning demonstrates greater curricular cohesiveness at Northside and marks movement along a continuum toward a WISE.

Concurrent with increased curricular cohesiveness, teachers saw an increase in writing intensity. Four teachers mentioned the end-of-the-year gallery walk in which teachers displayed student work showing low-stakes writing in nearly every subject. Teachers pointed out that seeing written explanations of science concepts would have seemed unusual even the year before, but they were clearly visible in 2008–2009. By the end of that year, the principal commented on changes in teachers’ awareness of how they were using writing with their students:

[The TC] did a lot of consciousness-raising so people are more deliberate about writing instruction now than they were before—and that goes for the humanities as well as the nonhumanities people. One of the things that [the TC] has been particularly successful in doing is making the nonhumanities people feel more comfortable about thinking of themselves as writing teachers.

Several teachers described developing more reflective teaching practices around literacy over the two-year period of this study. A humanities teacher articulated the shift in thinking:

The main focus of our PD in terms of writing has been “Why are we doing what we’re doing?” Just being more mindful and conscious of it. If we’re asking students to write a page about
something, what are we looking for? And how are we better supporting them in helping them to be able to do those things?

In particular, during our 2008–2009 interviews, teachers spoke about moving from doing writing with their students to using writing to support specific learning goals. Teachers used the words “thoughtful,” “aware,” “conscious,” “thinking about why,” and “getting it” to describe their shift toward more conscious implementation of low-stakes writing to support student writing development. As Northside High School developed toward a WISE, teachers saw an increase in curricular cohesiveness, the shared understanding and articulation of how and why to use writing to foster student learning.

Changing Teaching Practices
To support the development of a WISE in light of the preexisting intermediate-stage professional-learning community and the high level of teacher motivation and expertise at Northside, Monica integrated herself into the school community as much as possible during the first year on site. However, during her second year, Monica moved from offering support wherever she saw opportunities to do so, to providing consistent support for teachers’ literacy development in more visible ways. In 2008–2009, the principal initiated a sustained focus on low-stakes writing over an extended period of time to affect a shift in teaching practices. The principal recognized that for change to occur, whole-school professional development needed to be integrated into the life of the school:

If we limit our understanding of what PD is to the hour or two a month when teachers are physically sitting in the same room together, we are not going to get anywhere. PD has got to be what happens in the team meetings, in the discipline meetings, when the TC is talking to people who want to know more, when there is curriculum planning going on . . . that should be PD also.

The teacher-consultant sustained the focus on developing teacher literacy practices outside the biweekly professional development sessions. When asked if they thought the teacher-consultant had had an impact schoolwide, several teachers mentioned that the teacher-consultant facilitated sharing and refining literacy practices with outside of the biweekly professional development sessions. For example, a math teacher reported that Monica consistently returned to teachers to get feedback about their experience trying a particular strategy or approach in their class:

[Writing] is something a lot of people were thinking about and working on, but [the TC] has brought consistent focus to it. That is where she’s paying attention. So while I’m thinking about [using writing to support learning] in between content that I want to address, she’ll follow up with me and say, “How did it go? What did you do” If it went well, “Can I share it with another teacher?”

Although the preexisting teams at Northside represented effective professional communities, most of the teachers who were interviewed indicated that prior to the NYCWP program,
communication between teams was less common, which they felt may have limited the
development of schoolwide curricular coherence. A biology teacher observed:

_We are pretty autonomous in our teams, but then that makes it difficult because we don’t always communicate between teams well. And so [the TC] has been like the lymph in the system, oozing back and forth, carrying things all around, to use a science analogy._

That is, Monica fulfilled an essential task in bridging the communication gaps among teams, an important aspect of creating a WISE.

THE TEACHER-CONSULTANT: PARTNERING WITH A SCHOOL COMMUNITY

During 2007–2008, the teacher-consultant, Monica, focused on developing relationships with teachers and administrators, and on understanding the needs of the school community. Building on that year’s momentum toward the creation of a WISE, Monica worked closely with teachers in 2008–2009 to support collaborative and consistently reflective teaching practices around literacy, define uses for low-stakes writing in all subject areas, and explicitly connect writing to existing student-centered teaching objectives. Throughout both years, a sustained focus on literacy at Northside grew out of and reinforced Monica’s relationships with teachers. She explained:

_So much happened in year two because we had established relationships in year one. The continuation of the work [in 2008–2009] was an important factor for math and science teachers who needed time to develop trust that we would meet their needs as opposed to imposing strategies that did not fit their teaching styles or the teaching goals of their discipline._

In addition to changes in the ways writing was used in some classrooms, Monica helped teachers conceptualize themselves as teacher-learners by linking teachers’ own literacy experiences to their teaching practices in workshops, individual consultations, and professional development. Monica worked with the staff four days each week in several ways as described in Table 8. In the second year, the teacher-consultant’s responsibilities shifted to a more visible schoolwide role, and the number of individual consultations with teachers decreased. As part of the professional development planning committee, Monica facilitated biweekly full-staff professional development sessions that emphasized the use of low-stakes writing to support high-stakes writing throughout 2008–2009. In addition, she consulted with teachers formally and informally across the curriculum, consulted with the principal, and led an after-school workshop during the spring semester.

<p>| Table 8. NYCWP teacher-consultant involvement in Northside High School 2007–2009 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                                 |                                 |                                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Series</th>
<th>Spring 2008: An Exploration of Teaching with Writing</th>
<th>Spring 2009: Reading and Writing Connections in the ELL Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>Using journals and writing to learn activities for</td>
<td>Content: Sessions focused on: Reading and Identity, Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a reflective teaching practice and for student</td>
<td>and Literacy, Content-area Literacy, Technology, and 21st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reflection on learning</td>
<td>Century Literacies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
<td>Duration: 6 sessions for 5 hours each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 teachers</td>
<td>2 math, 2 science, and 2 humanities</td>
<td>9 teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 music, 2 math, 2 science, 4 humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations with Teachers</td>
<td>Content: Class visits, work with students, lesson planning, project planning, classroom routines, debriefing after classroom visits, using technology in classroom activities, finding appropriate reading materials, discussing teaching practice and student learning (particularly issues specific to ELLs and to assessment)</td>
<td>Content: Class visits, work with students, lesson planning, project planning, debriefing after classroom visits, finding appropriate reading materials, discussing teaching practice and student learning (particularly issues related to ELLs). Extensive work planning and co-teaching writing with technology projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Teachers Daily*: 3 humanities</td>
<td>2 Teachers Daily*: 2 humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 Teachers Weekly**: 1 literature, 1 art,</td>
<td>4 Teachers Weekly**: 3 humanities, 1 drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 science, and 1 math</td>
<td>3 Teachers Sustained Low-frequency***: 2 math, 1 humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Teachers Sustained Low-frequency***: 1 math,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 global studies, 1 literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Responsibilities</td>
<td>• Teaching assignment—several SSR periods (include modeling and sharing active reading strategies/activities)</td>
<td>• Consult with principal and PD committee to focus biweekly PD specifically and consistently on writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consult with principal to focus professional</td>
<td>• Lead 16 PD workshops including first cross-team sharing of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development and identify schoolwide pedagogical</td>
<td>best practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>issues (interdisciplinary work, reading and writing, multiple assessment tools)</td>
<td>• Attend weekly team meetings, PD planning committee meetings, and advisory support committee meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend weekly team meetings; professional</td>
<td>• Teach SSR including modeling and sharing active reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development planning committee, and advisory</td>
<td>strategies, and finding grade-level appropriate books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support committee</td>
<td>• Help plan and implement schoolwide Health Day event,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lead professional development workshops</td>
<td>including pre- and post-reflection writing activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build teacher resource center</td>
<td>• Consult with teams on SSR programs and CFI assessment of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Coordinate writing center activities including training peer-writing tutors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Demo lessons  

• Coordinate after-school creative writing club.

Note: *Daily consults = 2 or more meetings/week, **Weekly consults = 1 meeting most weeks, *** Sustained low-frequency consults = several meetings during the year.

As teachers learned to use low-stakes writing in support of formal academic writing during 2008–2009, they created new opportunities within the professional community for experimentation and collaboration. As a mature professional community, the school will continue to benefit from professional development that is aimed at sustaining and enhancing such an environment. This renewal of teaching practices in response to change and growth suggests that a WISE is fluid, as the principal expressed when asked if he considered the NYCWP’s work in his school to be near completion:

*It never occurred to me that there would be an end point. I never thought for a minute that this would end—I just think that it’ll shift.*

At the end of 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 all teachers (n=24) completed a survey about their participation with the NYCWP. Results are presented in Table 9. Many teachers (67 percent in 2008 and 71 percent in 2009) said they had developed stronger relationships with colleagues through their participation, that Monica met her goal of strengthening professional community by engaging teachers in sharing teaching practices and problem solving around literacy.

Over the two years, a growing number of teachers (57 percent in 2008 and 84 percent in 2009) at Northside reported that their work with the NYCWP helped them use informal writing with their students to “learn course content or think more deeply and critically about concepts” moderately or frequently. Closely related to this development in supporting student learning, 52 percent of teachers in 2008 and 73 percent in 2009 reported that their collaboration with the NYCWP had helped them engage students in the writing process through techniques like sharing drafts, prewriting, and peer response moderately or extensively. These outcomes demonstrate that teachers intensified their use of low-stakes writing to support student learning and literacy development.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent has your work with the NYCWP helped you to . . .</th>
<th>2007–8</th>
<th>2008–9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. . . use informal writing to help your students learn course content or think more deeply and critically about concepts?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further analysis revealed no differences in outcomes between teachers who participated in the NYCWP workshop series and those who did not, nor between teachers with more than three years of teaching experience and those with less.

Although both qualitative and quantitative findings show that teachers were using more informal writing in their classrooms, many teachers did not see a direct connection between low- and high-stakes writing. Monica noted this tension in 2007–2008 when discussing the potential of the Northside portfolio review. Portfolios provided a visible framework for students to reflect on their learning through writing, but as a formal assessment, this kind of writing was considered “high-stakes.” Students had had little support in developing their reflective writing skills and had not been asked to perform this kind of writing before. Monica observed that the high-stakes writing portfolio was not scaffolded by low-stakes writing:

> When kids get to the end of the semester, they do these essays that reflect on their learning for the past semester. But I have not seen a lot of reflective writing along the way. So the first time I saw the portfolios, I was amazed—especially with the process leading up to that day—amazed that kids were sitting day after day for a week, looking back. Being asked to say, “What did you struggle with? What did you learn? How do you feel your language has developed?” It came to me that that is a hard thing to do.
Thus, early in her first year at Northside, Monica sought to introduce writing as a tool for learning to use it throughout the semester in order to scaffold the portfolio review, rather than introducing students to reflective writing during the high-stakes portfolio review. In whole-school professional development and after-school workshops, the teacher-consultant used journals as a way to deepen the experience and the conversation in the community of teacher-learners about using writing as a tool for learning. Because she saw that concern about writing among teachers and students had resulted in frequent, graded writing assignments reflecting elements of the standardized tests students were required to take, Monica suggested that Northside should focus more on low-stakes writing during 2008–2009. She explained:

*I wanted the writing to be less stressful so that the language learning could happen through the writing. I went into the year knowing what the school needed . . . I noticed a lot of writing when I first came to the school, but I thought that teachers were overly concerned with correctness and fluency and they were using writing a lot as a product. They cared a lot about it, but those important and genuine products could be supported by writing tasks that were not as high stakes.*

As teachers continued the discussion about using writing to learn throughout 2007–2008, they prioritized professional development in 2008–2009 that could deepen their knowledge of using writing in these ways.

Schoolwide professional development became the centerpiece of working toward a WISE in 2008–2009. Monica consulted with the principal and professional development committee members to focus biweekly professional development sessions specifically and consistently on using writing in a variety of ways to support overarching literacy goals including academic literacy. Although Monica led eight professional development sessions, her efforts were largely aimed at helping teachers to share ideas, problems, and practices with each other. The teacher-consultant explained that she was interested in teachers coming to view themselves as learners alongside their peers and students:

*In looking at low-stakes writing and how low-stakes writing supports the higher-stakes, we often would ask teachers to do some writing on their own, to experience it, and then to understand it, and then to apply it to their classrooms.*

Over the yearlong focus on literacy, the biweekly professional development offered teachers a place and time to reflect on their work and learn together. It provided a space where teachers could discuss any problems that arose as they developed writing assignments to support students’ growth in literacy and grasp of academic content. The starting point for the professional development was for teachers to look at the work they were doing with students in their classrooms. Once teachers ascertained what students needed to be able to do to participate in a discipline and in a class, they could then begin to identify ways in which low-stakes writing could be used to support those goals.
Monica emphasized that she did not create a specific professional development agenda but worked with teachers on the professional development committee to shape it:

_What made [the PD] work was the fact that it was determined by a committee. Although the focus was articulated, the implementation was discussed by peers in terms of what direction to take next, what needed more or less support at any given time throughout the year._

The sustained focus on low-stakes writing generated both positive feedback and tensions among teachers in 2008–2009. The principal and all of the teachers who were interviewed thought the use of low-stakes writing helped to raise awareness about the connection between writing and learning across subject areas, but teachers also articulated tensions in their understanding of low-stakes writing connected to their students’ needs to pass high-stakes tests and produce academic writing, suggesting an ongoing focus for future professional development.

**THE CLASSROOM: CHANGING LITERACY PRACTICES**

During her first year at Northside, Monica worked with staff to establish writing as a tool for learning (e.g. offering teachers opportunities to foreground student voices, engage students’ prior knowledge and creativity, use formative assessment, and provide multiple entry points to students). Increasing the amount of low-stakes writing (assignments that were either graded informally or not graded at all), allowed students to engage in writing to learn. In order to take advantage of opportunities to think, learn, and understand more about subject matter through writing, students needed to feel comfortable taking risks and experimenting with different kinds of writing. During 2008–2009, students encountered low-stakes writing across the curriculum. Eight of nine teachers interviewed described including more informal writing in their classes. One humanities teacher reported:

_Across the whole school, [teachers] are trying to bring in low-stakes writing when they really didn’t do that before. The writing was a lab report or something like that in science class. It was important, and there weren’t as many little steps, or writing wasn’t used as much just to generate ideas._

A biology teacher found that his students benefited from low-stakes writing in two ways: more language developed as students revisited their own writing, and students were able to include more evidence in support of their ideas. Although producing a lab report took more time, low-stakes writing assignments gave students the opportunity to make observations and generate hypotheses, engage with the ideas more deeply, and demonstrate understanding of biological concepts. The biology teacher reflected on the changes he had made:

_Before I would have just breezed through [the lab report] with whatever they got, but now I am spending time having them do rewrites, do different drafts, do peer editing, using observation notes and journaling in their drafts . . . I had to cut back on the presentation because it had taken_
so much more time, but I felt like what we were doing was valuable, so I didn’t want to stop that process from happening.

As noted above, however, the increased use of low-stakes writing generated some tension among teachers in 2008–2009. Some teachers did not want to take time to use low-stakes writing with students, preferring to continue direct instruction in essay writing and error correction. Half of the teachers interviewed reported uncertainty over the impact of low-stakes writing on their students’ high-stakes writing skills. Some teachers expressed concerns for English language learners if they were given fewer opportunities to learn grammar and essay forms. Teachers felt responsible for helping students succeed on gate-keeping assessments and wanted to give them extensive practice in the genre. As a humanities teacher reported:

_They have to write essays on the Regents. I didn’t teach essay writing my first year, and then I found that it was detrimental to them—that they really needed it because they come in not knowing what a thesis statement is. So I find it necessary to teach them what the American structure is—introduction, body, conclusion. It doesn’t produce very interesting writing, but they need to know it._

Some teachers, on the other hand, saw how low-stakes writing supported the development of high-stakes writing skills. A humanities teacher reflected on the change in her practice:

_Last year, I knew that the students had to learn to write essays on the Regents exams and that this was going to be particularly challenging for them as English language learners. So I tried to help them organize their thoughts and paragraph structure . . . This year, I wanted to try some different types of writing with them and allow for more creativity and less structure. We did a whole unit on poetry, a unit on mythology, and more journal writing. I found that when they wrote in other instances and were structuring their paragraphs, they were much better organized, and the writing was much better._

Quantitative data corroborate teachers’ reports in 2007–2008 and 2008–2009. When writing was included as part of learning subject-area content, students were less likely to consider themselves poor writers or to hold negative attitudes about writing. Surveys measuring students’ experiences with writing, writing self-concept, and attitudes toward writing were administered in classes at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the school year. Table 10 shows descriptive statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>p-values</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>p-values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience with writing</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing self-concept</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students at Northside reported being more frequently engaged in the writing process and more frequently being given voice through choice of assignments and sharing ideas by the end of the both school years than they were at the beginning. For example, the .51 point mean increase in *experiences with writing* in 2009 was significant (p <.001) in paired t-tests. Mirroring qualitative findings, students reported an increase in writing-to-learn activities.

The .34 point mean increase in *writing self-concept* was significant (p <.001) in paired t-tests for the 2008–2009 sample. Students were more likely to report that they felt they were a “good writer” and that others saw them as a “good writer” at the end of the school year than they were at the beginning. There was a statistically significant correlation between a positive *writing self-concept* and more frequent *experiences with writing* (Pearson correlation = .48, p <.001). This finding indicates that students who had more opportunities to engage with writing-to-learn activities across the curriculum were more likely to develop confidence in themselves as writers.

Schoolwide, students were also more likely to report more positive *attitudes toward writing* the more they were engaged in *experiences with writing* in 2008-09 (Pearson correlation = .51, p <.001). The 1.3-point mean increase in student *attitudes toward writing* was significant (p <.001) in paired t-tests, a positive result of using writing across the curriculum for a variety of learning activities.

Across the curriculum, increased use of writing and other changes in teaching practice is associated with students’ improvement on timed writing tasks. Students’ writing skills were assessed by comparing scores from on-demand writing samples collected at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the school year. Table 10 provides descriptive data.

All twenty-nine students in the longitudinal sample were eleventh-graders in 2007–2008 and seniors in 2008–2009. Descriptive data are shown in Table 11. Overall, scores were clustered at the low end of pre- and post-writing skills measures with two-thirds of students scoring at or below 2. Correlations for all six traits and the holistic score were positive, ranging from .29–.44 (p <.001) suggesting that all traits and the holistic measure were closely related.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>Time 3</th>
<th>Pairwise Comparisons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Holistic Writing</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score (SD) ms</td>
<td>(.79)</td>
<td>(1.09)</td>
<td>(1.03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although mean scores increased in all categories over the school year, paired analysis of variance suggests that student writing skills did not increase significantly over time. The results are shown in Table 10. The analysis yielded no significant group differences over time in students’ holistic writing skills score ($F_{[2, 56]} = 1.21$, $p = .001$). Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was valid ($\chi^2[2] = .89$, $p = .22$). Analysis of variance did find significant differences over time for Stance ($p < .05$). However, because the main effect was non-significant post hoc comparisons were not conducted.

We attribute the absence of change demonstrated in writing skills to testing fatigue. Review of student writing revealed a noticeable reduction in the amount students wrote in response to prompts between time 1 and time 2, in spring 2009. Further, results of these analyses should be interpreted with caution due to the likelihood that student growth in writing and level of student English language proficiency were confounded in writing skills as measured here. Although change over 2008–2009 is captured in each category of the scoring rubric, this rubric was intended for English-speaking students and may not be sensitive to the nonlinear development of ELL students’ writing skills over a year’s time. Frequently, as students acquire new forms and meanings of English and experiment with more complex sentences and nuanced meanings, new grammatical and lexical mistakes occur. Thus, patterns of growth are more divergent than in the writing of native English speakers (Lightbown and Spada 2009).

### CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM CASE STUDY 1

At the level of the school community, the data show movement toward a stronger professional community and greater curricular cohesiveness within grade-level teams across 2007–2008 and 2008–2009. Teacher professional community acted as a conduit for change in teaching practices, facilitating communication about innovation in teacher practices. These innovations by teacher-learners strengthened individual teachers’ work and reinforced the professional community as a whole. The use of low-stakes writing to support student learning and academic literacy
development was incorporated across the curriculum and supported by existing teaching teams, as well by the linkage between teams that the teacher-consultant facilitated.

From the perspective of the teacher-consultant, the administration, teachers, and the teacher-consultant at Northside moved toward an articulated focus on using low-stakes writing in support of high-stakes writing across disciplines. Teachers raised concerns about the connection of low-stakes to high-stakes writing such as passing gate-keeping standardized assessments. Nonetheless, as teachers learned to use low-stakes writing in support of formal academic writing during 2008–2009, they created new opportunities within the professional community for experimenting, sharing, problem solving, and collaborating. This renewal of teaching practice in response to change and growth suggests that a WISE is fluid.

Finally, at the classroom level, many teachers reported positive outcomes from using more low-stakes writing in class; others reported uncertainty about the effect of low-stakes writing on students’ high-stakes writing outcomes. Students reported experiencing more writing-to-learn activities at the end of the year than they had at the beginning of the year. Increased experience with writing was related to more positive attitudes about writing and about themselves as writers. The absence of demonstrable change in writing skills over time may be due to testing fatigue or nonlinear language-development patterns of the all-ELL student population.
CASE STUDY 2
EASTRIVER SECONDARY SCHOOL

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN CONTEXT
Eastriver Secondary School is a small public secondary school\(^4\) in Queens comprising grades 7–12. Eastriver’s students have diverse educational backgrounds and span six grades. Most are minority students (see Table 1), and most qualify for free or reduced lunch. Despite sharing a building, the seventh to eighth grades and the high school were described by many teachers as separate schools: the selective junior high offers an arts-focused curriculum, whereas the high school admits a majority of new students without testing and retains few of the junior high cohort.

Classes at Eastriver Secondary School ranged in size from fourteen students to more than thirty. Most classrooms were organized in rows or rows of grouped desks that faced the teacher and blackboard. During our visits, we found most classes were conducted with the doors closed, and most students worked in small groups on one task or were led in whole-class discussions.

Teachers interviewed in 2007–2008 and in 2008–2009 described Eastriver as “great,” “a really good school,” or “a good place to learn.” When prompted to provide more detail about their school, all eleven teachers interviewed referenced their own classroom or said they were not familiar enough with events outside of their classroom to comment. Teachers described Eastriver as a school in transition in terms of the school’s environment and their interaction with the administration. A math teacher provided the following observation:

\(^4\) A junior high school and high school combined.
We used to have a high turnover, but recently we don’t. Some synergy came about, and people are beginning to stay and form a community. I think we’re on the right path now.

Related to feeling their school was undergoing transitions, teachers commented that Eastriver did not have a coherent curriculum, offer enough instructional support to teachers, or support constructive conversations about students’ needs and strengths. The principal described his school as driven by “expectations and responsibilities” for teachers and students, concepts which, in our thematic analysis of interview data, were closely tied to students passing high-stakes tests. The principal admitted that teaching goals were not clearly defined:

We haven’t had a mission statement revision in twelve years because we never get it written down. We try to do it; it’s really hard. It has to grow out of what we do . . . I would like to think that student responsibility and student rules grow out of a larger purpose of what we’re doing in school, both teachers and students.

However, despite tensions about unarticulated teaching goals, the principal was enthusiastic about the idea of a WISE to train teachers to better support student literacy development.

THE SCHOOL: GRASSROOTS LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

When NYCWP professional development began at Eastriver Secondary School in 2006–2007, the principal framed literacy development as a bridge between the classroom and high-stakes gatekeeping assessments, which rely heavily on academic literacy skills:

We have a very good staff, but we need to have conversations and action plans about the kinds of instruction that will most benefit our students. Literacy is the most important part of the discussion because that is the area where students are the most lacking. Literacy means wanting to read, carrying around a book, having discussions in class. But there is a large group of students who do not engage in that on a serious level for a lot of emotional, academic, and social reasons.

The principal’s comments highlight conceptual distance from the NYCWP’s approach to using reading and writing to enhance student learning. The principal valued literacy as a skill students could acquire from teachers to improve outcomes. Within a WISE, literacy is valued as a student-learning process with individual learning trajectories.

In 2006–2007, the teacher-consultant, Steve, was asked to work with teachers throughout the school to infuse the school community with various uses of writing. In 2007–2008, after some debate over whether the NYCWP would again be contracted to provide professional development for Eastriver, the principal asked Steve to work exclusively with the school’s four English teachers. In 2008–2009, after more uncertainty about whether the NYCWP would return to the school, the principal requested that Steve work with teachers individually across the disciplines.
Each year, the principal allotted fewer opportunities for schoolwide professional development. Asked if he was concerned that spending less time with the whole staff might reduce the impact of NYCWP PD at Eastriver, the principal responded candidly:

*I don’t think it makes that much of a difference . . . We’re saying as a community, as a school faculty that each of us is going to try to think about this in ways that we reach more students.*

In fact, the creation of a WISE at Eastriver was impeded by the administration’s inconsistent commitment to the development of a WISE and its incompatible focus on working with individual teachers rather than schoolwide professional development.

In order to work toward a WISE, Steve focused on developing professional community and on helping teachers use writing to learn broadly across the curriculum. During 2007–2008 and 2008–2009, Steve’s goals for helping teachers to improve student literacy included

- building professional community by creating opportunities for teachers to share ideas and literacy practices
- bridging an instructional-leadership vacuum in the school by mentoring teachers to enhance instruction and teacher growth
- working with teachers across the curriculum to generate more opportunities for students to write diversely within different subject areas.

**Professional Community**

In 2007–2008, teacher professional community at Eastriver Secondary School was in the novice stage of development: a culture of collaborative problem solving and shared goals for student learning was not widespread (McLaughlin and Talbert 2006). Some teachers began to develop expertise in using writing as a tool for student learning in 2007–2008, but in the absence of either a unified curricular focus, or school leadership that encouraged teachers to take risks in order to improve their practice, most students were unlikely to encounter writing across subject areas.

Teacher characteristics and their participation are shown in Table 12. Although collaboration among teachers was limited, Steve worked to strengthen teacher professional community where it existed and support teachers in reflecting on, sharing, and strengthening literacy-based and student-centered teaching practices. Thus, the teacher-consultant worked throughout 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 to move the professional community at Eastriver from novice to intermediate.

**Table 12. Teacher participation by characteristic (n=27)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching experience:</th>
<th>Percent of Teachers within Row Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years or less</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>
At Eastriver Secondary School, professional community was not evident at the whole-school level. Instead, professional communities formed outside of school-sanctioned structures or as subgroups within grade-level teams and discipline groups. Table 13 displays the percent of teachers who visited at least one colleague’s classrooms, talked with at least one teacher about ideas and strategies for teaching, and discussed curriculum with at least one teacher during 2008–2009. This sample of twelve teachers represents one-third of the total faculty at Eastriver. Strikingly, the majority of teachers had not done any of these things over the last year.

Table 13. Teacher professional support networks (n=12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Teachers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This year, who have you . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . visited or has visited you to see teaching practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . discussed content, teaching strategies and ideas with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . discussed curriculum and links to other class’s curriculum with?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *A teacher at your school who is not on your grade-level team nor in your discipline
Some disciplinary groups and grade-level teams managed to meet each week, but as the mean frequencies show, most teachers did not talk about content, curricular issues, or visit the classes of team- or discipline-group members. Four teachers had not discussed instruction or curriculum with even one peer, nor visited another teacher’s classroom in 2008–2009. Three veteran teachers interviewed in 2008–2009 described teaching at Eastriver as “solitary” or “isolating.” The NYCWP teacher-consultant filled the professional community vacuum at Eastriver by mentoring teachers. Steve supported teachers by encouraging them to take risks in their teaching; suggesting strategies, activities and adaptations that could improve teaching practices; and problem solving with teachers when they presented teaching challenges.

The principal allocated planning time to grade-level teams: seventh through eighth, ninth, and the new tenth grade. Eight teachers reported that they rarely talked about teaching or curriculum issues with their teams; discussions tended to focus on individual students and school administrative matters. A history teacher explained that curriculum and teaching were not prioritized in team meetings:

> Our school really falls short in terms of supporting teachers instructionally. There are not enough conversations about instruction in this building. Most conversations deal with student academic failures.

Similarly, another history teacher reported that although meetings took place regularly, the focus was on student issues, particularly students who were deemed at risk:

> I don’t discuss curriculum enough with anybody. I would say that is almost totally absent from our daily process . . . When we’re having meetings every week, we’re not really discussing curriculum; usually, we’re discussing crisis situations with kids.

Other teachers reported that they had begun to talk about teaching practices with a subset of team members in 2008–2009. These teachers identified two or three teachers on the team who were interested in collaborating on content and curriculum and with whom they shared ideas. Yet even some teachers who saw the teams’ potential for supporting teacher learning wondered if the existing school culture was compatible with these competing organizational structures.

The principal was aware of the absence of discussion about teaching and learning in the school. He described the school’s current organization as containing a lot of committees that were avenues for teacher decision making, but he speculated on the importance of conversations about curriculum, instruction, and assessment:

> We have been focused on developing habits that enable students to become better students, but what is missing is work that focuses on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, areas that can have an impact on student growth.

Writing Across the Curriculum
When asked if they had noticed any schoolwide changes that could be attributed to Steve’s work with teachers at Eastriver, teachers’ responses varied. Half of the teachers interviewed reported that they were not aware of any schoolwide changes although they saw Steve as an agent of change. One history teacher reflected:

*Initially I saw some momentum to change, and then it kind of just died. And I think it had a lot to do with consistency. If [the TC] had come in year one and was in charge of all PD, and every PD was whole staff, and the same for year two and year three—but it’s been haphazard.*

Some teachers noticed changes in Eastriver but did not attribute them to Steve’s work. One said that “frustration with the status quo” drove shifts in teachers’ practices and relationships. These teachers, who viewed the teacher-consultant as an aid for teachers who had been in the school less than three years, were unsure if any changes in the school might be attributed to Steve’s work.

Three teachers reported that they saw evidence of more writing, attributing this to the work of the teacher-consultant. An English teacher noticed a shift from “these kids don’t have literacy” to “writing is a practice.” She reflected that Steve’s presence generated awareness of the use of writing in subjects other than the English language arts:

*The TC’s] presence has been advantageous to the extent that writing can be attended to even beyond the English department. And I think it is a very nice consciousness, seeing literacy strategies and expectations applied across a wider spectrum of the curriculum.*

Finally, another English teacher reported that in addition to seeing more writing, she had also seen a decrease in teachers’ fears and uncertainty about teaching with writing, since teachers knew they could go to the teacher-consultant if they had concerns or questions about using writing in class.

**THE TEACHER-CONSULTANT: PARTNERING WITH TEACHERS**

As describe above, the teacher-consultant’s efforts to create a WISE at Eastriver were impeded by the administration’s inconsistent commitment to the development of a WISE and the principal’s request that Steve work with individual teachers rather than support the use of writing schoolwide. Nevertheless, the teacher-consultant worked with Eastriver’s staff during 2008–2009 in several ways (see Table 14). In addition to teaching a seminar after school in fall 2008 and spring 2009, Steve spent two days a week at Eastriver consulting formally and informally with teachers across the curriculum, and he led one professional development session during a schoolwide professional development.

**Table 14. NYCWP TC involvement in Eastriver Secondary School 2007–2009**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Series</th>
<th>Fall 2007: The Teachers We Are; The Teachers We Want To Be</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Inquiry into our teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 teachers</td>
<td>enrolled: 1 English, 1 CTT, 1 foreign language, 1 resource room, 1 health, 1 social studies, and 1 math</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2008: The Nature and Use of Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content: Inquiry into supporting students in using evidence to support their ideas in research writing to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration: 10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 teachers enrolled: 3 English, 1 CTT, 1 foreign language, 1 art, 1 science, and 1 library</td>
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<tr>
<th>Spring 2008: Reading/Writing Connections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content: Using writing to help with reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration: 10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 teachers enrolled: 2 English, 1 resource room, 1 science, 1 CTT, 1 foreign language, and 1 art</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Spring 2009: The I-Search</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content: I-Search research emphasizes use of primary sources and analysis of the research process itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration: 10 sessions for 2 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 teachers Enrolled: 2 social studies, 1 math, 1 English, 1 CTT, 1 foreign language, and 1 art</td>
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<tr>
<th>Consultation with Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content: Unit and lesson planning, resource gathering, writing for learning, co-teaching in classrooms, working with individual students or small groups, revision techniques, grammar questions, and test prep, resource gathering, and adding literacy skills to content learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Teachers Daily*: 3 English, 1 math, and 1 CTT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Teachers Weekly**: 1 math, 1 health, 1 art, 1 library, 1 foreign language, and 2 CTT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Teachers Sustained Low-frequency***: 2 English, 2 CTT/resource room, and 2 science</td>
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<th>Additional Responsibilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 full-staff workshops: Writing in the Subject Areas, Using Writing to Help with Difficult Texts</td>
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</table>

| 1 full-staff workshop: Reading in the Subject Areas |

Note: *Daily consults = 2 or more meetings/week, **Weekly consults = 1 meeting most weeks, ***Sustained low-frequency consults = several meetings during the year
Most teachers saw Steve as a source of support and ideas about teaching in general and also about using writing in their classrooms. To foster the creation of a WISE at Eastriver’s novice stage of professional community, Steve established himself as a mentor for teachers. Teachers noted that Steve demonstrated a range of qualities that were valuable to them: experience as a teacher; empathy with their problems; availability to help out; experience with urban students; and an ability to generate new ideas and strategies for teaching.

At the end of 2007–2008 and 2008–2009, some teachers at Eastriver completed a self-assessment survey about their participation with the NYCWP. Results are presented in Table 15. Comparisons across years are not possible because of the low sample size for 2007–2008. Most teachers (59 percent) found that they had developed moderately or extensively stronger relationships with colleagues as a result of their participation. These data suggest that teachers benefitted from Steve’s work to strengthen professional community through engaging teachers in sharing their teaching practices. Qualitative data support this finding. Eight teachers interviewed in 2008–2009 reported that the opportunity to interact with colleagues in a deep, reflective conversation about teaching was a primary benefit of the workshop series. Teachers saw the workshops as a space to talk with colleagues, something for which they expressed a deep unmet need in their professional lives. A history teacher reported that he was able to think about new approaches to teaching based on conversations with peers in the workshop setting:

*It is nice to be with other teachers in this environment where you can write and talk about our ideas without having to be in charge of a bunch of kids, and it helps me think about new ways to approach my job.*

In 2008–2009, 78 percent of teachers reported that their work with Steve had moderately or extensively helped them to reflect on their teaching practice; half of the teachers reported that it had helped them extensively. Importantly, in 2008–2009, 55 percent of teachers also reported that their work with the NYCWP helped them use informal writing with their students to “learn course content or think more deeply and critically about concepts.” Teachers who reported benefiting from their work with the NYCWP in developing a more reflective teaching practice were also more likely to report using more informal writing in the classroom (Pearson correlation = .31, p <.05).

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<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent has your work with the NYCWP helped you to...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>. . . use informal writing to help your students learn course content or think more deeply and critically about concepts?</td>
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... involve your students in the writing process (e.g. generating topics, sharing drafts, prewriting, peer response, revising, editing, etc.)?  

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<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
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... bring out student voices in your classroom (e.g. by providing choices within assignments, providing opportunities for students to discuss their own ideas in class, etc.)?  

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<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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... develop students’ academic writing skills (e.g. in preparation for Regents exams and middle-grade standardized tests)?  

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<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<td>37.5</td>
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... build supportive relationships with other teachers and school staff?  

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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37.5</td>
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... reflect on your teaching practice?  

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<td>12.5</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>52</td>
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</table>

Further analysis of the 2008–2009 data revealed no differences in outcomes of working with the NYCWP between teachers who participated in the workshop series and those who did not, nor between teachers with more than five years of teaching experience and those with fewer than that.

Eastriver Secondary School emphasized teacher- and student-accountability through test scores. Teachers frequently used traditional tests and essays to assess student learning, but some teachers also employed low-stakes writing to support students in developing more formal writing products. In its function as a tool for assessing student learning, writing was often viewed as a product. Steve sought to help teachers understand writing as a tool for learning and as a vehicle for bringing students’ voices into the classroom. Steve explained that although Eastriver’s students were extremely motivated, they were not always engaged in thinking deeply and critically in their school lives:

*I’m trying to move across the curriculum and make sure that everyone is doing more writing. That in itself is helpful for the students and the teachers, because the teachers are thinking about writing, about ways of making it different, more useful, about involving the kids more in their subject matter through writing which makes it writing to learn. I like to see the students learning more deeply.*
To address this student need, Steve worked with teachers in their own classrooms by incorporating writing as a process to help students engage more deeply and critically with content and to foreground what students know. A number of teachers offered examples of courses, projects, and lessons that benefited from integrating writing-to-learn strategies and from the use of writing to bring out student voices. An English teacher reported that through her work with Steve, she developed greater awareness of how to scaffold student writing:

> Before I worked with [the TC] I wouldn’t have considered all the scaffolding for that [project]—so many things that needed to be set up before we could do [book presentations]: Like how to ask good questions. How to be respectful to someone talking. How to motivate thinking without summarizing the book. Allowing them to take over and not teaching the whole time.

Mentorship at the right times could prevent teachers from abandoning the use of writing prematurely. At this school where teachers were concerned with their students’ performance on standardized tests and other accountability measures, Steve worried that, left unsupported, teachers could come to the conclusion that using writing had not improved their students’ math or history scores, for example. Steve’s approach to coaching helped individual teachers over time to see in concrete ways how writing could support learning and student engagement in their own classrooms. Because writing practices were situated within individual classrooms, the teacher-consultant worked hard to provide the mentoring and support that individual teachers needed.

Despite Steve’s close involvement with teachers across the school, the principal reported that he rarely spoke with Steve during the school year and was largely unaware of the nature of his work with teachers. The principal reflected:

> I’m letting him do his thing. Compared to other principals, I am more of a hands-off person and that probably grows out of my own limitations. I’m an older person, and I wasn’t trained well in how to be a supervisor.

THE CLASSROOM: CHANGING TEACHER PRACTICES ONE CLASSROOM AT A TIME  
Eastriver students and teachers were motivated to improve student writing as a means of helping “failing” students pass standardized tests. To this end, the teacher-consultant worked with many of the teachers through workshops and individual consultations to incorporate specific writing-to-learn opportunities into their classroom instruction. Several teachers reported changes in their thinking that resulted from their work with Steve.

For example, in 2008–2009, Steve worked with a history teacher to help her students actively engage in critical writing about films. The history teacher had found that while her students ably discussed elements within the film, such as plot, they had difficulty critiquing underlying assumptions. The history teacher articulated how a small shift in her awareness of the writing process led her to enhance students’ experience with writing and class discussions:
I think there was more conversation, having the kids talk about how they were going to approach the paper and that really helped my students get their thoughts together. And I actually gave the writing assignment to the students in class so that they could talk to each other, and the writing was done at home.

A veteran English teacher found that Steve’s involvement in her class raised her awareness of gaps between her verbal communication with students and their understanding:

I think it is difficult for someone who is proficient at writing sometimes to teach writing because it is difficult to understand what a student’s particular issues are. One of the things that [the TC] has done being in class with me is ask, after I give them an assignment, [I ask] “Ready? Got it? Good” And [the TC] will remind me to back up—“I don’t know if they all understood that.”

As participating teachers made changes in their teaching practices, we also measured changes in students’ experiences as writers at the beginning of each school year and again at the end of each year. Students’ experiences with writing, attitudes toward writing, and writing self-concept were assessed by self-report through surveys administered in class in each year of the study. Survey results were analyzed quantitatively; Table 16 shows descriptive statistics.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience with writing</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing self-concept</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward writing</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During 2007–2008 and 2008–2009, students at Eastriver reported being more frequently engaged in the writing process and more frequently given voice through choice of assignments and sharing ideas by the end of the year. The 1.16 point mean increase in *experiences with writing* in 2008–2009 was the largest increase and was significant (p <.001) in paired t-tests. The reported increase in writing-to-learn activities mirrors qualitative findings which show that some classrooms had incorporated more writing activities to support learning and to bring out student voices.

The 1.08 point mean increase in *writing self-concept* was significant (p <.001) in paired t-tests. The degree to which students reported that they felt they were a “‘good writer and that others saw them as a “good writer” increased from the beginning of the year to the end. There was a
statistically significant correlation between a more positive writing self-concept and more frequent experiences with writing (Pearson correlation = .29, p < .001). This finding indicates that students who had more opportunities to engage in writing-to-learn activities across the curriculum were more likely to develop confidence.

Schoolwide, students were also more likely to report more positive attitudes toward writing the more frequently they were engaged in experiences with writing (Pearson correlation = .22, p < .001). The 1.03 point mean increase in 2008–2009 in student attitudes toward writing was significant (p < .001) in paired t-tests. This increase suggests a positive impact of the use of writing across the curriculum for a variety of learning activities on students’ attitudes toward writing.

Across the curriculum, increased use of writing and other changes in teaching practice are associated with improvement in a timed student-writing task. Students’ writing skills were assessed by comparing scores from on-demand writing samples collected at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the year. Table 13 provides descriptive data for the student writing outcome measure. Across times 1, 2, and 3, scores were concentrated in the mid-range of pre- and post-writing skills measures: two-thirds scored between 3 and 5.

The longitudinal sample of 110 students for whom we had complete data for fall 2007, spring 2008, and spring 2009 includes 43 eleventh-graders and 56 ninth- through tenth-graders; we also had complete data for 14 seventh graders during 2007–2008. Results of the longitudinal analysis are displayed in Table 16. Analysis of variance yielded significant group differences over time in students’ Holistic Writing Skills ($F[2, 218] = 10.95$, p = .001). Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was valid ($\chi [2] = .97$, p = .16). The results show that student writing skills increased significantly.

| Table 17. Repeated measures analysis of variance of holistic writing skills (n=110) |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Category                        | Time 1 Fall 2007 | Time 2 Spring 2008 | Time 3 Spring 2009 | Pairwise Comparisons |
| Mean holistic writing Score (SD) | 3.23 (.98)       | 3.15 (1.14)       | 3.65 (1.10)       | t1>t2 ns t2<t3*** t1<t3 ** |
| Mean content score (SD) ***     | 3.36 (1.04)      | 3.27 (1.21)       | 3.75 (1.11)       | t1>t2 ns t2<t3 ** t1<t3 *** |
| Mean structure score (SD) **    | 3.09 (1.05)      | 3.00 (1.23)       | 3.43 (1.19)       | t1>t2 ns t2<t3 * t1<t3 ** |
| Mean stance score               | 3.53             | 3.47             | 3.91             | t1>t2 ns |
Post-hoc comparisons were conducted using the Tukey adjustment for multiple comparisons. No statistically significant changes in students’ holistic writing scores occurred between the beginning and end of the 2007–2008 school year. On average, students began the 2007–2008 school year scoring 3.23 in holistic writing skills but dropped .08 points by the end of the year, challenging routine assumptions that all students experience growth in writing skills over the academic year. The lack of change demonstrated from time 1 to time 2 could represent less-focused writing intervention or could simply reflect testing fatigue, given the time of year. However, paired comparisons show a significant 0.5 point increase between spring 2008 and spring 2009 (p <.001). Each of the writing traits scores demonstrate a similar pattern of no significant changes over the first year, followed by significant gains in writing skills over 2008–2009. Correlations for all six traits and the holistic score were positive, ranging from .27–.41 (p <.001); this suggests that students’ writing skills at the beginning of the year were related to their skills at the end of the year.

To further corroborate these data, post-hoc analysis divided the sample into three equivalent groups based on grade; however, no significant differences were found. An additional analysis divided students into three equivalent groups based on student writing skills at the beginning of the year to explore whether students with different levels of writing skills fared differently over time. No significant differences were found in this sample. (See 2009 LSRI Report for more detail on this analysis for 2008–2009).

We attribute the 2008–2009 increase in writing skills to Eastriver’s sustained focus on the writing development of “failing” students over two years’ time. Data show a concurrent increase in student experiences with writing in 2008–2009, indicating a positive relationship between experiences with writing and writing skills.
CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM CASE STUDY 2
The NYCWP teacher-consultant worked with individual teachers across subject areas in a school where teachers had not previously seen writing as a tool for learning and did not have a strong teacher professional community to effect changes in teacher practice. Mentoring teachers to support student learning and literacy development generated more writing in individual classrooms across the curriculum, but most teachers did not see a schoolwide impact attributable to their work with the teacher-consultant.

From the teacher-consultant’s perspective, the creation of a WISE at Eastriver was impeded by the administration’s inconsistent commitment to a WISE and a focus on providing professional development to individual teachers rather than schoolwide professional development emphasizing the uses of writing. However, Steve worked with teachers individually to support their teaching and strengthen teacher professional community. Although a full-fledged WISE did not emerge, teachers positively assessed opportunities facilitated by the teacher-consultant to interact with other teachers around teaching issues.

At the classroom level, many teachers reported positive outcomes as a result of using more writing with students, and students reported experiencing more writing-to-learn activities. Students who experienced more writing were more likely to have positive attitudes about writing and about themselves as writers. Over time, students’ holistic writing skills increased significantly, suggesting that a sustained focus on writing may have helped students develop their writing skills. Some teachers showed awareness of areas for improvement, including working with mid-level and more advanced writers to move them forward.
DISCUSSION
The noncomparative case studies of Northside High School and Eastriver Secondary School illustrate how differences in school culture and structure shaped the NYCWP’s work, ultimately leading to differing degrees of success in developing a high degree of opportunity for students to engage in learning through varied and meaningful forms of writing throughout their school day. Considered together, the case studies suggest that a focus on literacy across the content areas (curricular cohesiveness) is not achieved in the absence of a mature professional community or independent from high writing intensity in a school. In fact, when they coexist, these three mutually-reinforcing elements contribute to the effectiveness of WISE-focused professional development.

Northside High School gained a high level of curricular cohesiveness across content areas. From 2007–2008 to 2008–2009, momentum remained focused on moving the thinking of the school community forward, defining ways in which low-stakes writing could support student learning and student performance on high-stakes writing tasks. The NYCWP worked with teachers both schoolwide and individually to instill the frequent and sustained use of writing-to-learn activities. As teachers learned to use low-stakes writing in support of formal academic writing during 2008–2009, they created new opportunities within the professional community for experimentation and collaboration. Conversely, Eastriver sustained a low level of curricular cohesiveness, due in part to the principal’s inconsistent commitment to a WISE from year to
year and the lack of schoolwide professional development focused on curriculum. At Eastriver, a WISE was not consistent with the existing culture of the school.

As the administration, teachers, and the teacher-consultant at Northside moved toward an articulated focus on using low-stakes writing in support of high-stakes writing across the curriculum, data show concurrent movement toward a stronger professional community. Teacher professional community acted as a conduit for change in teaching practices, facilitating communication about innovation in teacher practice. Innovation in teaching practice—instantiated in teacher-learners—strengthened individual teachers’ work and reinforced the professional community as a whole. As Case Study 1 illustrates, a WISE is inherently fluid; a mature professional community like the one at Northside will continue to benefit from professional development aimed at sustaining and enhancing such a fluid environment.

On the other hand, the novice professional community of Eastriver Secondary School did not encourage teachers to take risks, form teacher networks focused on learning from each other, or dedicate resources to teacher learning. In the absence of teachers’ awareness of how writing can be used as a tool for learning and without the presence of a strong teacher professional community to effect changes in teacher practice, the NYCWP teacher-consultant worked with individual teachers across subject areas. Mentoring teachers to support student learning and literacy development may have generated more writing across the curriculum, but most teachers did not see a schoolwide impact attributable to their work with the teacher-consultant, beyond individual changes in classroom practice.

Finally, writing intensity was demonstrably increased at Northside while it did not coalesce at Eastriver. Case Study 1 shows that writing intensity was supported by alignment of the school’s leadership’s visions with the NYCWP, cohesiveness of the school’s curriculum, and the level of development of the professional community.

It is our hope that conceptualizing the characteristics of a WISE along these continuua (writing intensity, curricular cohesiveness, professional community), and illustrating what they look like in divergent school environments, will facilitate the understanding of how unique school contexts affect the implementation of professional development aimed at helping educators move along a trajectory—from discernibly different starting points—toward a WISE.
REFERENCES


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**Appendix 1: New York City LSRI Cohort V Logic Model**

Revised 06/05/2008
## Appendix 2: Research Questions, Data, and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data and Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is a writing-intensive school environment (WISE)?</td>
<td>A theoretical framework is provided from review of literature and findings of the current study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How did the NYCWP support the development of a WISE at different stages of professional community over time?</td>
<td>Noncomparative mixed-method case studies of two schools. Interviews with teachers and administrators were analyzed for characterization of professional community. School observations and school publications were analyzed to verify these findings. Representative quotes were then pulled to illustrate these findings in participants’ own voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What indicators of progress toward WISE did schools demonstrate over time?</td>
<td>Interviews with teachers from different content areas, school administrators, and the teacher-consultant were thematically analyzed for ways in which literacy practices were thought about and practiced across the curriculum. Classroom observations and artifacts were analyzed to support these findings. Representative quotes were then pulled from interviews to illustrate these findings in participant’s own voices. Focus groups with teachers from different content areas were conducted at the end of 2008–2009 and were thematically analyzed for ways in which literacy practices had been thought about and practiced schoolwide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. To what extent did NYCWP teacher-consultants and school staff develop common goals over time?</td>
<td>Self-reported Student Survey data taken at the beginning and end of each school year were compared quantitatively to find the amount of within student change during the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. To what extent did coherent literacy practices become evident across content areas?</td>
<td>Self-reported Student Survey data and Student Writing Samples taken at the beginning and end of each school year were compared quantitatively to document within student change for each year. In addition, samples of student work in math and science classes were discussed as illustrations of the ways in which working with the NYCWP effected change in teacher practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Did teachers identify changes in the schoolwide conceptualization and practice of literacy over time?</td>
<td>Paired observations and interviews with teachers were analyzed for changes in teacher professional community, teacher literacy practices, and teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To what extent did students’ attitudes about writing, self-concept as writers, and experiences with writing change over time?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. How did teachers’ involvement with the NYCWP relate to change in student writing outcomes and student attitudes about writing over time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Did teachers’ involvement with NYCWP on-site professional development effect change in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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classroom practice? beliefs about literacy and the role of other teachers in professional development. Interviews with teacher-consultants about their work with each teacher participant were analyzed to verify these findings. Representative quotes were pulled from interviews to illustrate findings in participants’ own voices. Teacher Surveys were administered at the end of each school year to assess the impact of collaboration with NYCWP.

7. How did teachers’ involvement with NYCWP on-site professional development help to build a professional community over time? Paired observations and interviews with teachers were analyzed for changes in teacher professional community, teacher literacy practices, and teacher beliefs about literacy and the role of other teachers in professional development. Interviews with teacher-consultants about their work with each teacher participant were analyzed to verify these findings. Representative quotes were pulled from interviews to illustrate these findings in participants’ own voices. Teacher Surveys were administered at the end of each school year to assess the impact of collaboration with NYCWP.
## Appendix 3: Inductively Developed Thematic Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Thematic Category</th>
<th>Axial Codes</th>
<th>Characteristic Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School [SCH]</td>
<td>1 No interdisciplinary collaboration</td>
<td>SCH-5</td>
<td>So we’ve been doing a little less interdisciplinary work this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Positive experience of interdisciplinary</td>
<td>SCH-5</td>
<td>We always do interdisciplinary things, so I have to know what [teacher] is doing in science, what [teacher] is doing in Global history . . . so that I can support their class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 No evidence of schoolwide literacy</td>
<td>SCH-6</td>
<td>You are talking to people who are in your discipline-field specifically all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>practices</td>
<td>PC-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PC-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PC-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Evidence of schoolwide literacy</td>
<td>SCH-6</td>
<td>Having that common vocabulary of everybody talking about evidence, if I'm talking about it in my class, and [teacher] is talking about it in her class, and [teacher] is talking about it in her class . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>practices</td>
<td>PC-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PC-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PC-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 School culture</td>
<td>PC-3</td>
<td>Our strongest attribute at our school is we get students so interested and involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Role of TC in school</td>
<td>SCH-4</td>
<td>Grace has turned herself into a member of the school not just as a writing consultant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SCH-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Community [PC]</td>
<td>1 Description of</td>
<td>SCH-5</td>
<td>The structure of the school is pretty horizontal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Role of PD</td>
<td>SCH-5</td>
<td>We spent a day as a school talking about low-stakes writing, bringing in examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SCH-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TW-2</td>
<td>[Principal] is always available. Like always.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Practice [TP]</td>
<td>1 Formal assessment is important</td>
<td>SCH-5</td>
<td>There is also in the back of my mind the side bar conversation going on about—is this something that is going to help them prepare to be successful on the state exam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Formal assessment doesn’t affect my</td>
<td>SCH-5</td>
<td>Before in my previous school [Regents test scores] were very important, but here, no, it’s not a priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s more of a global perspective, and I don’t really get an opportunity to have those kinds of conversations or to think those kinds of thoughts except in that particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Opportunity for teacher conversation</td>
<td>TP-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TW-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Change in teacher practice
5 Change in teacher thinking
6 Want discipline-specific opportunities

| Classroom literacy practices [CLP] | 1 Use more writing process | CLP-2 | Now I am spending more time having them do rewrites, do different drafts, do more peer editing.
| 2 Use more low-stakes writing | CLP-1 CLP-5 CLP-6 | One of the ideas that [teacher-consultant] gave me was having more low-stakes writing . . .
| 3 Use more evidence in writing | CLP-2 CLP-5 CLP-6 | That has been the big emphasis for me is having them include more evidence for what their assertions are.
| 4 Support language development through writing | CLP-1 CLP-2 | The language part of it obviously [benefits from] the more times I'm looking at it, the more opportunities to correct it.
| 5 Support critical thinking through writing | CLP-2 CLP-3 | How do you write a testable hypothesis? “I predict this because . . .”
| 6 Support reading through writing | CLP-1 CLP-2 | We did a lot of more [low-stakes writing] because my focus is more on getting them to write and to understand reading for what it is.

| Teacher work with teacher-consultant [TW] | 1 Experience of long-term relationship | CLP-1 CLP-2 CLP-5 CLP-6 | I talked to [Grace] about how I could incorporate more reading and writing with that extra period.
| 2 Experience of PD | SCH-5 SCH-6 CLP-2 CLP-5 CLP-6 | [Teacher-consultant] and I were also part of this professional development committee about helping students to write and improve their English and their reading.
| 3 Informal experiences | CLP-1 CLP-2 | I'm like informally seeing [teacher-consultant] and talking about curriculum,
bouncing ideas off of her.
Appendix 4: Teacher Survey

NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT
2008–2009 End-of-Year Teacher Survey

Dear Participants,

The following is a voluntary survey that we are asking all teachers who participate in the New York City Writing Project’s Local Site Research Initiative to complete. The survey will be used to collect information about the Writing Project’s effectiveness and to help us refine and extend our inservice program for high school teachers. The survey results will not be used in any way to evaluate individual teachers or schools. No individual names will be reported. Please help us by taking a few minutes to complete this survey.

We appreciate your assistance and thank you for your important contributions to urban education.

Name (please print): _____________________________ Signature:_____________________

School: ____________________________________ Date:_________________________

SECTION A: BACKGROUND

1. Undergraduate Degree (check all that apply):
   - Education, (specify area) _______________________
   - Other, (specify area) _______________________

2. Graduate Degree (check all that apply):
   - Education, (specify area) _______________________
   - Other, (specify area) _______________________
   - None

3. How long have you been teaching? Number of years: ______

4. How long have you been teaching at this school? Number of years: ______

5. What grades do you teach? (check all that apply)
   - 7th    8th    9th    10th    11th    12th

6. What subject areas do you teach? (check all that apply)
   - Arts    Math    Science    Language Arts    Other (specify) _______________

PLEASE TURN OVER ➔
7. Which aspects of the NYCWP inservice program have you participated in this year? (check all that apply)
   ▶ Work with on-site teacher-consultant individually: □ Occasionally □ Moderately □ Often
   ▶ Teacher-consultant-facilitated workshops: □ Fall □ Spring □ Both fall and spring
   ▶ After-school graduate seminars: □ Fall □ Spring □ Both fall and spring
   ▶ Events (e.g. study groups, invitationals): □ Fall □ Spring □ Both fall and spring
   ▶ Professional development: □ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 or more this year
   ▶ □ None

8. Have you previously participated in a NYCWP seminar? □ Yes □ No
   Number of seminars attended: _____

To what extent has your work with the NYCWP helped you:

9. Use informal writing to help your students learn course content or think more deeply and critically about concepts?
   □ Not at all □ Somewhat □ Moderately □ Extensively

10. Involve your students in the writing process (e.g. generating topics, sharing drafts, prewriting, peer response, revising, or editing, etc.)?
    □ Not at all □ Somewhat □ Moderately □ Extensively

11. Bring out student voices in your classroom (e.g. by providing choices within assignments, providing opportunities for students to discuss their own ideas in class, etc.)?
    □ Not at all □ Somewhat □ Moderately □ Extensively

12. Develop students’ academic writing skills (e.g. in preparation for Regents exams and middle-grade standardized tests)?
    □ Not at all □ Somewhat □ Moderately □ Extensively

13. Build supportive relationships with other teachers and school staff?
    □ Not at all □ Somewhat □ Moderately □ Extensively

14. Reflect on your own teaching practice?
    □ Not at all □ Somewhat □ Moderately □ Extensively

Appendix 5: Student Writing Survey
Dear Student,

The following is a voluntary survey that we are asking all students in your school to complete. This survey will be used to collect information about the New York City Writing Project’s effectiveness and to understand more about the supports and barriers to literacy education. The survey results will not be used in any way to evaluate you, your teachers, or your school. Please help us by taking a few minutes to complete this survey. At the end of this course, we will ask you to complete another survey. All responses to these surveys are confidential and will be kept by an independent researcher in locked file cabinets. No individual names will be reported. Participation in this survey will not influence your grades.

We appreciate your help and thank you for taking time to complete this survey.

Date _______________________________________

Teacher’s Name: _____________________________

Grade (please circle one): 7th  8th  9th  10th  11th  12th

Writing Survey

For each of the following items please circle the response that best describes your feelings or experiences.

1. I think I’m a good writer.   Strongly Agree  Disagree Strongly Agree      Disagree

2. Other kids in my class think I’m a good writer.   Strongly Agree  Disagree Strongly Agree      Disagree

3. There are people in my family who think I’m a good writer.  Strongly Agree  Disagree Strongly Agree      Disagree

4. My teacher thinks I’m a good writer.  Strongly Agree  Disagree Strongly Agree      Disagree

5. Writing is a way to express myself.  Strongly Agree  Disagree Strongly Agree      Disagree

6. Writing is something I do for a grade.  Strongly Agree  Disagree Strongly Agree      Disagree

7. Writing helps me understand things I read.   Strongly Agree  Disagree Strongly Agree      Disagree

PLEASE TURN OVER
8. Writing is a way to understand my feelings.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

9. Writing is a way to help me understand my thinking.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

10. Writing is a way to share my ideas.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

11. Writing is something I often do outside of school.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

12. I like writing.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

This is how often I experience writing at school:

13. I write about topics I choose.
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Never

   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Never

15. I revise and edit my writing.
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Never

16. I discuss my writing with my teacher.
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Never

17. I use prewriting skills like brainstorming listing, mapping, or outlining.
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Never

18. My teachers share their own writing with students.
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Never

19. I save my writing.
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Never

20. I use writing in other subject areas.
   - Daily
   - Weekly
   - Monthly
   - Never

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!