

CALIFORNIA WRITING PROJECT
PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS:

A STUDY OF BENEFITS
TO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

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JUNE 2003

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Page i
I. INTRODUCTION.....	Page 1
II. BACKGROUND – PARTNERSHIPS IN CWP CONTEXT	Page 4
III. TEACHERS AND ACTIVITIES IN CWP PARTNERSHIPS	Page 8
IV. BENEFITS OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR TEACHERS.....	Page 12
V. INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS’ CLASSROOM PRACTICES.....	Page 15
VI. BENEFITS TO STUDENTS	Page 27
VII. SUMMARY STATEMENT	Page 29

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

- A) CWP SITES AND PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY
- B) SURVEY FORMS
- C) UNIVERSITY COMPETENCIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

CALIFORNIA WRITING PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Partnerships as a new context for California Writing Project professional development

In 1998, the California Subject Matter Projects (CSMP) launched an initiative, in response to AB 1734, designed to make *partnerships with schools* a strategic context for providing professional development to teachers. Such partnerships would consist of long-term, formal relationships between schools and CSMP sites, and would involve tailored professional development activities for teachers as well as CSMP participation in school-level strategic planning. The partnership initiative was based on this notion: the school organization is an important unit of change and an important context for teacher development; thus, as CSMP sites worked directly with teachers, they would do so as part of a long-term and more in-depth relationship between CSMP sites and schools.

For the California Writing Project (CWP), in operation since the mid-1970's, the partnership initiative added a new dimension to an array of teacher development programs conducted at a statewide scale. In 2001-02, the 18 sites of the CWP offered 1,714 different programs that served 19,530 individual educators.¹ About 65% of all these programs were inservice programs, mostly conducted in schools during the academic year. By 2001-02— four years after the launch of the partnership initiative — 30% of all CWP inservice programs were conducted within the context of a partnership. The CWP reported a total of 146 partnerships with schools, districts and other agencies that year.

Developing these partnerships was, in some ways, a natural outgrowth of programs that mature CWP sites had been offering in schools in year-round contracted inservice programs and in multi-year school-university programs sponsored by University of California campus Outreach offices and by California State University programs with high schools. Nonetheless, the new partnership initiative required a major shift in the role of CWP site directors and teacher-consultants, most notably a more intensive investment of time in, and different and ever-evolving kinds of work with, a smaller number of high-needs schools.² Given this shift in context for their work, CWP leaders began quite naturally to wonder about the extent to which

¹ These figures and all data other than that from the partnership survey are taken from the Annual Site Profile of the National Writing Project, conducted by Inverness Research Associates.

² Appendix A includes a brief description of the major focus and activities of the 30 partnerships included in this study. These reveal the variety, depth, and evolutionary quality of the professional development they involve.

the professional development offered in partnerships was effective for teachers. They decided to initiate an inquiry into the following questions:

- *Is the content of the professional development in CWP partnerships valuable to teachers?*
- *Are teachers learning about classroom practices that can improve students' achievement and help them prepare for higher education?*
- *Are teachers able to apply what they learn to their classroom teaching?*
- *Do teachers believe their students are benefiting?*

In the fall of 2002, the California Writing Project asked our group at Inverness Research Associates³ (IRA) to conduct a survey of teachers participating in CWP partnerships. This Executive Summary highlights the results of that survey; more detailed findings and survey results are included in the full report.

A survey of teachers in CWP partnerships

Each CWP partnership is jointly developed by the CWP site and the school partner, and thus they vary from each other in their content focuses and activities. However, within each partnership, the program of professional development is designed to be coherent and ongoing. Our study does not test the effectiveness of a particular CWP partnership or type of activity. Rather, it examines more broadly the extent to which the professional development offered within these partnerships supports teachers in developing their classroom practices in important ways.

The survey asked teachers about the value and quality of the professional development they experience in CWP partnerships, and about the benefits for their students. The survey also asked about the extent to which teachers use particular classroom practices related to the teaching of writing and to the accompanying skill of reading, and the extent to which those practices have been influenced by the professional development offered in the CWP partnership. Among the classroom practices we asked about are those that are statistically correlated with higher achievement on writing and reading assessments of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), as well as those that are associated with university standards and expectations for academic writing. This enabled us to assess the extent to which the professional development offered in CWP partnerships—in all its variety—is consistent with standards and expectations that are important to public policy and institutions of higher education.

There were two versions of the survey, one for teachers of grades K-5 and one for grades 6-12. Fifteen CWP sites participated in the study, and 30 partnerships formed the sample, with equal numbers of elementary and secondary partnerships. A total of 563 teachers in these 30 partnerships responded to the survey.

³ Inverness Research Associates is an education evaluation and research group headquartered in Inverness, California. Please see www.inverness-research.org for further information.

FINDINGS

For any professional development to be effective, it must have educationally significant *content* and it must exercise some *influence* on teachers' classroom practices. Our findings address both of these.

Summary Findings

Taken together, the survey results document the following:

- ◆ In the context of its partnerships with schools, the CWP is offering professional development content that is of significance and value to the participating teachers and that many teachers believe is ultimately beneficial to their students.
- ◆ In CWP partnerships, teachers learn about classroom practices that are correlated with high achievement on assessments administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and they learn about practices that are consistent with college and university standards for student competency in writing.
- ◆ Substantial proportions of participating teachers report that they are increasing their use of effective classroom practices as a result of their participation in the CWP partnership.

More Detailed Findings

Below, we highlight key findings related to the knowledge and skills that teachers gain through their participation in CWP partnerships, the influence of CWP professional development on their classroom practices, and their perspectives on the value of the professional development for their students.

◆ **What kinds of professional development activities do teachers experience in CWP partnerships?**

Many teachers who are involved in CWP partnerships participate in activities that relate directly to classroom teaching, for example, workshops and coaching on teaching writing. Additionally, substantial proportions of participants engage in CWP-supported endeavors that can have an impact at the level of the whole

school, such as school- and district-wide writing assessment and school improvement planning.

◆ **How do teachers rate the quality and value of professional development offered in CWP partnerships compared to that offered by others?**

A large majority, 85% of all participants, report that professional development offered in CWP partnerships is of higher quality and greater usefulness than professional development offered by others.

◆ **What do teachers gain from the professional development they receive in CWP partnerships?**

Across all grade levels, a substantial majority of teachers say the professional development in CWP partnerships provides them with skills, knowledge and concrete teaching strategies that enable them to help their students meet state standards. More than half the teachers have also become more motivated to seek further professional development. Nearly three-fourths of secondary teachers say they also gain valuable knowledge about the teaching of reading.

◆ **How does the professional development in CWP partnerships influence teachers' classroom practices related to the teaching of writing?**

Participation in CWP partnerships has a substantial influence on teachers' strategies for teaching writing across all grade levels. Further, teachers across all grades report that, as a result of the partnership, they have increased their use of classroom practices that are statistically correlated with higher achievement on writing tests conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. At the secondary level, participation in the CWP partnership has influenced many teachers' use of classroom practices that support development of academic (college prep) writing.

◆ **How does the professional development in CWP partnerships influence teachers' classroom practices related to the teaching of reading?**

Participation in a CWP partnership has a stronger effect on secondary teachers' practices for teaching reading than on elementary teachers' practices, although elementary teachers do report some effects. More secondary teachers than elementary teachers report that the CWP professional development has influenced their use of reading practices that are correlated with higher scores on reading tests conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

◆ How do students benefit as a result of their teachers' participation in CWP partnerships?

A substantial majority of participating teachers report that their participation in the CWP partnership has brought about benefits for their students. Across all grade levels, 75% of teachers say their students better understand the qualities of good writing; 70% say their students write more often and write longer pieces because of their participation; and 65% of the teachers say their students have a better grasp of the conventions of written English, are more proud of their writing, are more able to explain their learning in writing, and have a better understanding of the value of writing.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Taking the full set of survey findings into account, we can say that CWP partnerships appear to be a supportive structure and fruitful context for teachers' professional development, and further, that the professional development activities that are offered within CWP partnerships enable many teachers to enhance their teaching in ways that are consistent with research and the standards of public policy.

Benefits of long-term support of the CWP network

The California Writing Project evolved from the Bay Area Writing Project, which was founded nearly three decades ago. Over these years, the CWP has built a well-organized network of sites, each of which—as its *raison d'être*—has continuously developed and supported teacher leadership that is focused on the teaching and learning of writing. This leadership capacity—the cumulative knowledge, skills, and opportunities of the teacher-consultants of the sites—served as a reservoir from which the CWP network could draw in response to the new partnership initiative. In a sense, the CWP's creation of these partnerships was akin to adding rooms onto a well-designed house built on a solid foundation. The promising results of this study speak to the advantage of bringing the resources of a mature and high-capacity project, such as the CWP, to bear on the challenge of improving teachers' in-school access to high quality professional development. By extension, the capacity of the CWP to respond to the partnership initiative – to build 146 partnerships within four years, and to demonstrate their value to teachers and students – speaks to the benefits that accrue from long-term local, state and federal support of the CWP network and its model.

Questions for further study

Developing these partnerships required CWP site directors to make changes in how they invested their own time and their site resources, including both funding and the leadership of teacher-consultants. The partnerships also broadened teachers' access to CWP resources. This study answers some questions, but raises others. For example:

- How do partnerships compare with other CWP contexts for professional development – for example, school inservice series that are not part of partnerships?*
- What benefits – immediate and potential – do partnerships have beyond offering teachers knowledge and skills that affect their classroom practice?*

Studies aimed at these questions would produce better understanding of the value-added, and perhaps the costs, of CWP investment in partnerships, and shed further light on the capacity and potential of the CWP network to support improvement in teaching.

CALIFORNIA WRITING PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF BENEFITS TO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1998, the California Subject Matter Projects launched an initiative, in response to AB 1734, designed to make *partnerships with schools* a strategic context for providing professional development to teachers.⁴ Such partnerships would consist of long-term, formal relationships between schools and CSMP sites, and would involve tailored professional development activities for teachers as well as CSMP participation in strategic planning. The partnership initiative was based on this notion: the school organization is an important unit of change and important context for teacher development; thus, as CSMP sites worked directly with teachers, they would do so as part of a long-term and more in-depth relationship between CSMP sites and schools.

For many sites of the California Writing Project (CWP), developing these partnerships was a natural outgrowth of work they had been conducting in schools since the mid-1970's, both in year-round inservice programs at all grade levels and, at the high school level, in college-preparation initiatives sponsored by the University of California and the California State University. For some CWP sites, creating partnerships was a brand new approach. Whether sites were re-shaping long-standing relationships or introducing themselves to new partners, the new initiative required a shift in the role of site directors and teacher-consultants, most notably a more intensive investment of time in, and different and ever-evolving kinds of work with, a smaller number of high-needs schools.⁵

Given these changes, CWP leaders began quite naturally to wonder about the extent to which the professional development offered within partnerships was effective for teachers. They decided to initiate an inquiry into the following questions:

- *Is the content of the professional development in CWP partnerships valuable to teachers?*
- *Are teachers learning about classroom practices that can improve students' achievement and help them prepare for higher education?*
- *Are teachers able to apply what they learn to their classroom teaching?*

⁴ See www.csmpp.ucop.edu for more information about the California Subject Matter Projects, including the California Writing Project.

⁵ Appendix A includes a brief description of the major focus and activities of the partnerships included in this study. These reveal the variety, depth, and evolutionary quality of the professional development they involve.

- Do teachers believe their students are benefiting?

In the fall of 2002, the California Writing Project (CWP) asked our group at Inverness Research Associates⁶ (IRA) to conduct a survey of teachers participating in CWP partnerships. This report presents the results of that survey.

Design of the study

The CWP sites and each of their partner schools decide jointly what the focus of the professional development content will be at the school, for example, academic writing, or writing across the curriculum, or writing to support an adopted reading program. Also, partnership activities target different groups of people within the school, for example, the grades 3-6 teams, or all teachers responsible for reading, or representatives of subject departments or the whole staff. Although partnerships vary from one another, within each partnership, the program of professional development is designed to be coherent, ongoing, and close to the classroom. The survey is not intended to test the effectiveness of any particular site, partnership, or type of activity. Rather, the survey addresses, more broadly, the extent to which CWP activities offered in partnership context support teachers in developing their classroom practices in ways that the CWP (and the larger education system) values.

CWP site directors were responsible for selecting one, two or three school partnerships for the study. We at Inverness suggested that CWP directors select them on the basis of the partnerships being mature (i.e., a working relationship of two years in length or more, so that teachers would have sufficient experience on which to comment) and of the partnerships being illustrative of the school contexts in which the CWP was investing the effort necessary to support a long-term, intensive working relationship. A total of 15 CWP sites participated, and they selected a total of 30 partnerships. The sample of 30 turned out to include some partnerships that were mature and others that were brand new and created in very challenging school contexts. Thus, these 30 do not represent best cases but rather the full range. Fourteen of the partnerships involve secondary teachers (at one or more schools); fourteen involve elementary teachers, and two involve both elementary and secondary teachers. Teachers who were actively involved in at least some partnership activities were asked to complete the survey.⁷

Inverness Research designed the survey, with input from the leadership of the CWP network. We created two versions, one for teachers in grades K-5, and one for

⁶ Inverness Research Associates is an education evaluation and research group headquartered in Inverness, California. Please see www.inverness-research.org for further information.

⁷ Appendix A lists the CWP sites that participated, the partnerships included, the year the partnership began, the number of respondents for each partnership and a description of each partnership.

teachers in grades 6-12. Both versions are based on a participant survey administered to invitational summer institute participants in the National Writing Project. This foundational survey focuses on practices that support the teaching of writing, and it includes those practices that are statistically correlated with higher student achievement on the 1998 writing assessment of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for grades 4, 8 and 12. The survey we developed for the CWP partnership study includes additional items that reflect specific questions that the CWP wanted to ask about its own professional development. For example, the CWP asked us to include questions about the influence of CWP partnerships on the teaching of *reading* in both the K-5 and 6-12 versions, including those practices that are statistically correlated with the 1998 NAEP reading assessment for grades 4, 8 and 12 and the 2000 NAEP reading assessment for grade 4. Additionally, on the grades 6-12 version, the CWP asked us to include questions about the influence of CWP partnerships on teachers' practices related to the development of *academic writing*, i.e., the types and qualities of writing that help prepare students for successful college work.⁸ By including these items, we are able to assess the extent to which the professional development that is provided in CWP partnerships helps teachers help their students meet standards and expectations that are important to public policy and institutions of higher education.

Following instructions from Inverness Research, CWP sites distributed the survey forms directly to participants in their programs while protecting the confidentiality of respondents and the integrity of the data.⁹ This shared responsibility for conducting the survey resulted in a total respondent group of 563 participating teachers, or an average of 38 teachers per participating CWP site and 19 teachers per selected partnership.

This report

In Section II. of this report, we describe the scale of CWP professional development activity in California, and we explain the scope of the CWP's partnership effort within the whole of CWP programming. We intend that this section serve as backdrop and context for the survey conducted in the sample of 30 partnerships. In Section III., we profile the teachers who responded to the survey and characterize the types of professional development activities they experienced in CWP partnerships. In Section IV., we present teachers' ratings of the quality of the professional development they received in the CWP partnerships, and their perceptions of the knowledge and skills they gained.

⁸ Appendix B includes both versions of the survey.

⁹ This method captures virtually all participants—and thus a fuller spectrum of perspectives—than a mail-back survey, where the response rate is lower.

Section V. presents a series of findings about the influences that CWP partnerships have had on teachers' classroom practices. We tie these findings to questions of interest to professional development practice and policy. For example:

- ◆ What classroom practices for writing and reading do teachers use more often as a result of the CWP partnership?
- ◆ How do CWP partnerships influence teachers' use of classroom practices that are associated with higher achievement on national assessments of writing and reading?
- ◆ How do CWP partnerships influence teachers' use of practices that are associated with university standards and expectations for entering freshmen?

Section VI. reports participating teachers' perspectives on how the CWP partnership has benefited their students. In Section VII., we offer a brief concluding statement about the benefits of long-term investment in the CWP as a professional development network.

II. BACKGROUND — PARTNERSHIPS IN CWP CONTEXT

The CWP landscape

The Writing Project has nearly 30 years of experience serving the teachers of California. The model originated with the creation of the Bay Area Writing Project in 1974, and the CWP was the first state network of sites.¹⁰ In 2001-02, there were 18 operational CWP sites; 13 of them were established prior to 1981 and are thus 20 or more years old. Of the other 5, one began in the early 1980's, two began in the 1990's, and two were created in 2001-02.¹¹ Among the sites' directors (typically university-based), the average length of service as director is 11 years; among co-directors (typically K-12 based), the average length of service is just over 5 years. CWP sites have an average of 66 teacher-consultants who are actively conducting site-sponsored programs, with the older sites having more and the new sites fewer.

The maturity and leadership capacity of the CWP network are reflected in its ability to serve substantial numbers of teachers across the state through a wide range of programs. In 2001-02, the 18 CWP sites reached a total of 48,000 participants in 1,714

¹⁰ For a personal history of the founding of the Writing Project, see James Gray's: *Teachers at the Center: A Memoir of the Early Years of the National Writing Project*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project, 2000. For a recent analysis of the model (based in part on a study of a CWP site), see Ann Lieberman and Dianne Wood: *Inside the National Writing Project: Connecting Network Learning and Classroom Teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2003.

¹¹ Data in this section are from the Annual Site Profile of the National Writing Project, administered by Inverness Research Associates.

different programs, including the core invitational summer institutes and other intensive summer programs, inservice workshops conducted in schools throughout the school year, continuity programs for the teacher-consultants of the sites and miscellaneous other programs such as conferences for teachers and young writers camps for students. Among the participants were 19,530 individual educators, or roughly 1 in 15 California teachers.¹²

CWP partnerships as a context for professional development

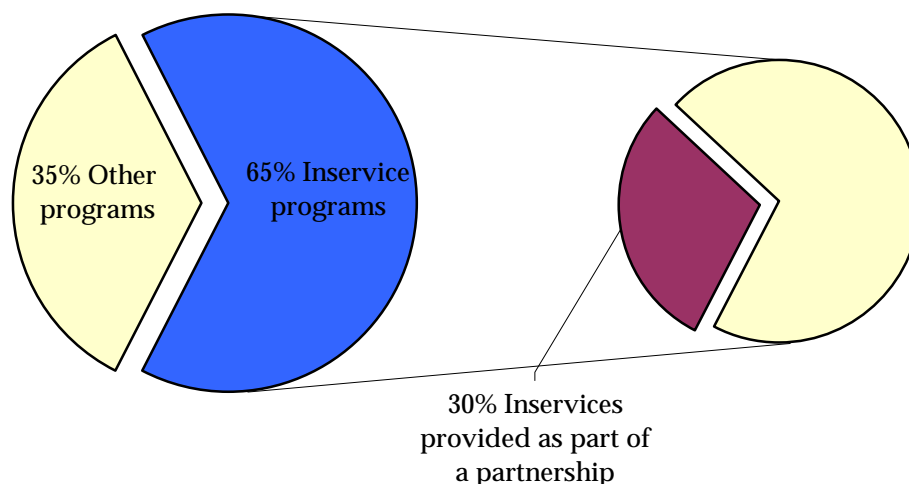
Partnerships formed by the California Writing Project involve long-term and collaboratively planned relationships with schools and districts, and they accommodate a variety of types of professional development activities (for example workshops, classroom coaching, curriculum revision, writing assessment), often evolving over time as the partnership matures. Partnerships are variously configured, usually involving a subset of teachers at a school or in a district (for example the English and History departments in a high school, or the grades 4-6 teams in an elementary school). What they have in common is that the CWP site and the partnering school (or selected schools in a district) are working together to provide teachers with coherent, ongoing and close-to-home professional development. Further, through CWP participation in school planning, the partners are working together to chart a course of improvement over time.

The pair of pie charts below shows what proportion of CWP inservice work takes place in the context of these partnerships. The chart on the left shows that inservice programs for teachers in schools comprises 65% of all CWP programming.¹³ The chart on the right shows that, among all those inservice programs, 30% took place in the context of a formal partnership.

¹² "Participants" include the total number of teachers, administrators, students and others at every CWP program. Some educators participate in more than one program; also, some participants are not educators (students, parents). Thus, the number of "individual educators" served in 2001-02 is a subset of the total level of participation. The 1 in 15 is based on the CDE figure of 306,834 teachers.

¹³ Inservice programs are any programs sponsored by the site in which the site's TC provide professional development to teachers. "Other" programs represented on the left-hand chart include invitational summer institutes, continuity programs to develop teacher-consultants' leadership, and youth and community programs.

Figure 1.
Proportion of all CWP inservice programs that are conducted as part of a partnership



In 2001-02, the CWP reported a total of 146 partnerships.¹⁴ Of this total, 65 of the partnerships were between a site and a whole district; 18 were with selected schools within a district; 50 were with individual schools; and 13 were with other entities, such as community organizations that serve children. A total of 5,194 teachers were actively involved in these partnerships in 2001-02, with an average of 76 teachers involved in district-wide partnerships, and an average of 25 teachers actively involved in partnerships with schools or selected schools in a district.

All but 15 of the 146 reported partnerships were formed between 1999 and 2002. Partnerships of this type, while sometimes built upon existing relationships with schools, thus represent a new strategy and context for professional development within this very mature CWP network.

¹⁴ These are reported on the Annual Site Profile of the National Writing Project, and match the following definition: “Partnerships’ refer to a site’s work with a school, district, or other agency that: a) includes shared goal-setting and planning, b) includes more than an inservice series, c) takes place over a period of years.”

Types of professional development activity carried out in partnerships

Partnerships allow for multiple and varying types of professional development activity, and the types typically evolve over time through joint planning. The following table displays the types of activities site directors reported that were included in all partnerships of the CWP during 2001-02, and the number of partnerships that included each type.

Table 1.
Types of activity included in CWP partnerships

Types of professional development activity	# of partnerships involving these activities	% of all partnerships (n=146)
Inservice workshops/institutes	77	53%
Demonstration teaching or classroom coaching	23	16%
Planning with school, district, or inter-district team	23	16%
Study groups, teacher research or seminar	20	14%
On-site writing assessment/examination	15	10%
Coaching or debriefing TCs	11	8%
Young Writers' program opportunities	10	7%
Continuity program workshops/institutes	7	5%
Programs for parents and community	6	4%
Training pre-service candidates	5	3%
Other youth programs	5	3%
Site or program planning meeting	4	3%
Retreat, renewal, or institute follow-up	3	3%
Site-sponsored conference or conference session	2	1%

III. TEACHERS AND ACTIVITIES IN CWP PARTNERSHIPS

In this section, we describe the teachers participating in partnerships and the activities they were involved in. We then present their ratings of the overall value and usefulness of the professional development they received.

◆ **What are the characteristics of teachers participating in CWP partnerships, compared to the general population of California teachers?**

Finding: Teachers participating in CWP partnerships generally reflect the diversity of the teaching population in California, with some variation in percentages of different ethnic groups. A greater proportion of CWP participants are fully certified than exists in the general population. Also, a substantially greater proportion of CWP participants are certified to teach English Language Learners.

The table on the following page compares the 563 teachers participating in this study with all California teachers on key demographic characteristics. This enables us to explore how “typical” these CWP participants are.

There are proportionally somewhat more women than men in the CWP sample than in the whole population of California teachers, though over-representation of women in professional development is typical. Within the CWP sample, there are proportionally more teachers of Pacific Islander/Filipino descent, and fewer of African American and Latino descent, than in the whole population. The sample includes a smaller percentage of non-credentialed teachers than there are in the state as a whole, and a substantially larger percentage of teachers who are certified to teach ELL. This latter difference is likely the result of CWP partnership programs’ focus on literacy development.

Table 2.
Comparison of CWP participants with California's teaching force

	CWP Participants 2003		Teachers in CA 2001-2002	
	#	%	#	%
Gender				
Female	442	79%	219,317	71%
Male	115	21%	87,517	29%
Ethnicity				
African American/Black	11	2%	15,644	5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	4	1%	2,073	1%
Asian	14	3%	13,360	4%
Latino/a Hispanic	35	7%	41,543	14%
Pacific Islander/Filipino	48	9%	3,831	1%
White	408	77%	227,694	74%
Other	11	2%	2,795	1%
Type of credential *				
Full Credential	509	92%	265,201	86%
Intern/Pre-intern/Emergency	47	8%	47,834	16%
Bilingual/ELL Certified				
	214	38%	69,394	23%

**Note: Teachers may hold more than one credential, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.*

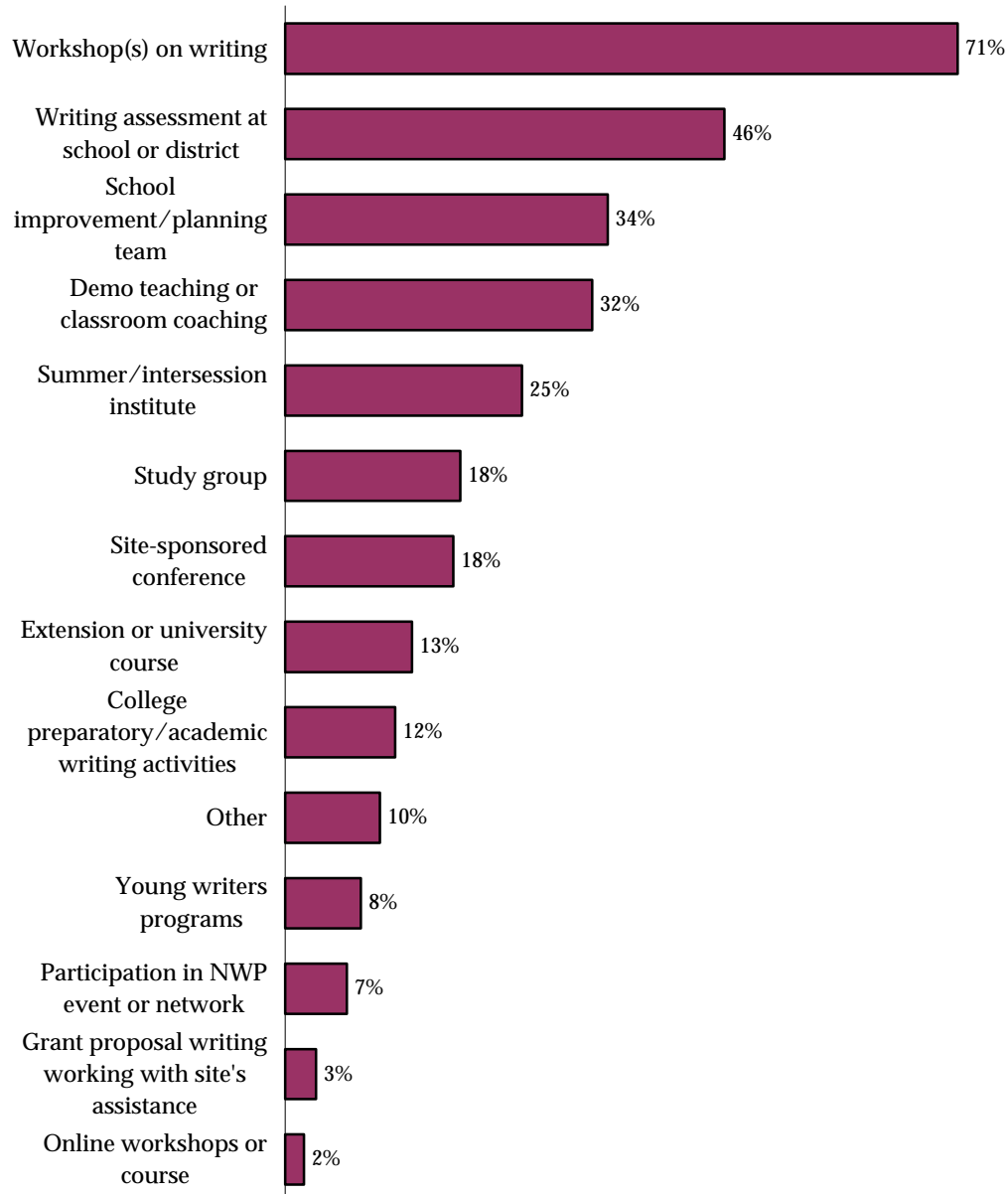
◆ **What kinds of professional development activities do teachers experience in CWP partnerships?**

One function of the partnership is to enable the CWP to offer multiple learning opportunities tailored to the interests of the teachers in the school and also to involve CWP in supporting and helping to frame long-term planning for school improvement. In our study, we asked teachers to identify what types of professional development they experienced.

Finding: Many teachers in CWP partnerships participate in school-based professional development that directly addresses classroom teaching strategies, for example, workshops on teaching writing and classroom coaching. Additionally, substantial proportions of participants engage in CWP-supported endeavors that can have an impact at the level of the whole school, such as school- or district wide writing assessments and school improvement planning. To some extent, teachers also have access to the mainstream institutes and programs offered by the site.

Figure 2, on the following page, portrays teachers' reports of the types of inservice activities in which they participated. Workshops are the most common activity; 71% of the responding teachers have participated in them. Nearly half the participants (46%) are involved in school- and district-wide writing assessments, where teachers jointly examine the level and qualities of their students' writing performances; and one-third are involved in school planning as part of the partnership. This means that, on average, 6 to 9 teachers in every partnership are involved in improvement efforts at the level of the school organization.

Figure 2.
Percentage of teachers who participate in particular partnership activities



Note: Results were similar for both K-5 and 6-12 teachers, with the exception of the following activities which showed at least a 10% difference between K-5 and 6-12 responses (in each comparison that follows, figures for K-5 are reported first): Writing assessment at school or district (1% vs. 21%), Extension or university course (11% vs. 24%), and Site-sponsored conference (19% vs. 30%). There is some discrepancy between what CWP directors report that they offered in partnerships (in Table 1) and what teachers say they experienced (in Figure 2) because directors were reporting on a single year (2001-02) and teachers were reporting on their experiences any time during their participation in a partnership; also, the directors were reporting on all partnerships and the teachers' reports are from this survey's sample of 30 partnerships.

IV. BENEFITS OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR TEACHERS

The survey asked teachers to indicate how valuable the CWP partnership was for them.

◆ **How do teachers rate the overall quality and value of professional development offered by the CWP, compared to that offered by others?**

We asked teachers to rate the quality and usefulness of the professional development they experienced as part of the CWP partnership, as compared to non-CWP-sponsored professional development.

Finding: A large majority, 85% of all participants, report that the professional development offered in CWP partnerships is of higher quality and greater usefulness than professional development offered by others.

◆ **What do teachers gain from the professional development they receive in CWP partnerships?**

The survey asked teachers to assess the extent to which they gained valuable knowledge and skills from the professional development they experienced as part of the CWP partnership.

Finding: Across all grade levels, the great majority of teachers say that CWP professional development provides them with skills and knowledge that are critical to the improvement of student learning:

- More than 4 in 5 have gained concrete teaching strategies and feel more able to help students meet standards.
- More than 3 in 4 have learned how to plan their teaching based on assessment of student work, have become more able to teach diverse students, and have become up-to-date on research on the teaching of writing.
- More than 3 in 5 have become more motivated to seek further professional development.

The results are displayed in the graph below.

Figure 3.
Percentage of teachers reporting benefits of Writing Project involvement
(all grade levels)



Percentages represent teachers who marked "4" or "5" on a 5-point scale where "1" = "disagree strongly" and "5" = "agree strongly."

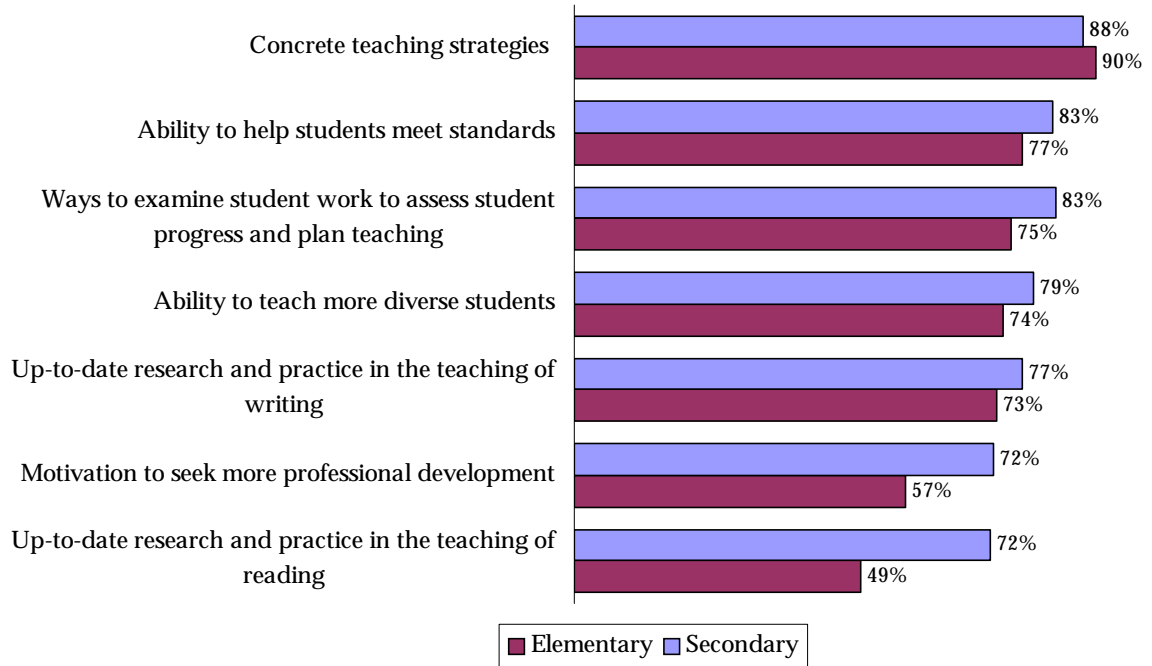
◆ **How do the benefits of professional development in CWP partnerships compare across elementary and secondary grade levels?**

When results for these items are broken down by the two grade level bands (K-5 and 6-12), there is a pattern suggesting that some aspects of the professional development in CWP partnerships are slightly more valuable for secondary teachers than elementary teachers. For those in secondary grades, the CWP partnerships seems to address a need for more knowledge about the teaching of reading, as well as writing.

Finding: Both elementary and secondary teachers consistently report that they gain concrete teaching strategies from CWP partnerships. However, slightly more secondary teachers than elementary teachers report that they have gained other types of knowledge and skill that are important to their teaching. A substantially greater percentage of secondary teachers are motivated to seek more professional development, and have gained valuable knowledge about the teaching of reading, because of the CWP partnership.

These results are displayed in the following graph, where the top band on each bar represents secondary teachers and the bottom band represents elementary teachers.

Figure 4.
Percentage of teachers reporting benefits of Writing Project involvement
(comparisons by grade level taught)



Percentages represent teachers who marked "4" or "5" on a 5-point scale where "1" = "disagree strongly" and "5" = "agree strongly."

V. INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PRACTICES

We asked teachers to report how frequently they use specific teaching practices in their classrooms. We also asked them to report which of those practices they use more frequently as a result of their participation in the CWP partnership.

Our measures of the CWP partnerships' influence on teachers' practice

The practices we included in our survey are those that are included in teacher and student surveys administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the areas of writing and reading. On our secondary grades survey, we also included classroom practices that reflect the writing standards of four-year public universities in California. Drawing from these sources enables us to assess the extent to which the professional development that is provided in CWP partnerships helps teachers help their students meet important public policy standards and expectations.

Findings for teachers in grades K-5

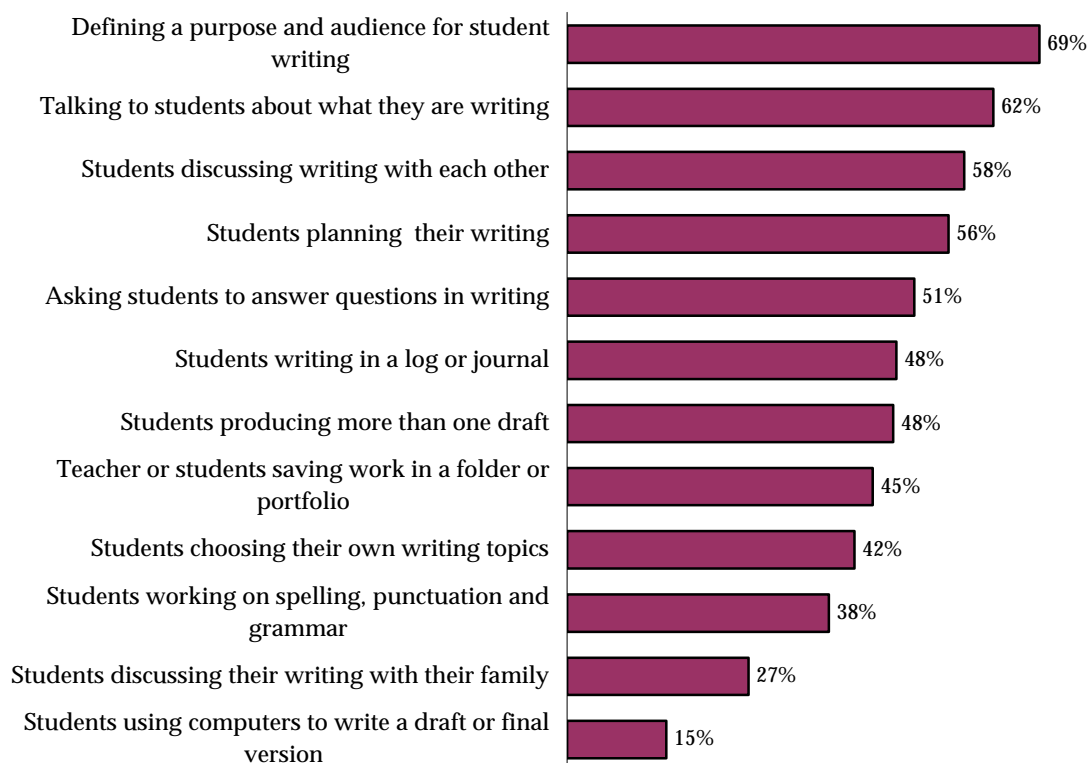
In grades K-5, we asked about practices that support the development of writing and of reading. We included both because, although the CWP emphasizes the teaching of writing, both the CWP and the teachers who participate in it are also concerned with developing students' literacy in both reading and writing, and many times the teaching of these two modes of language use are linked together.

◆ How do CWP partnerships influence K-5 teachers' classroom practices related to the teaching of writing?

Finding: Participation in CWP partnerships has a substantial influence on elementary teachers' strategies for teaching writing. Between 50% and 69% of the teachers say that because of the CWP partnership, they more frequently talk with students about their writing, define a purpose for and have students plan writing, and have students use writing to demonstrate learning. Between 38% and 48% of the teachers more often have students use writing for learning, have students produce multiple drafts and keep their work in portfolios, and teach the conventions of correct spelling and punctuation. Twenty-seven percent report that they have more often their students discuss writing with their families.

The results are displayed below.

Figure 5.
Percentage of K-5 teachers reporting more frequent use of practices that support writing development



Percentages represent teachers who marked "3" on a 3-point scale where "1" = "happens less often" and "3" = "happens more often."

◆ **How do CWP partnerships help K-5 teachers develop classroom practices that are associated with higher writing achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment?**

In 1998, NAEP conducted a nation-wide assessment of writing in grades 4, 8 and 12. For our study of CWP partnerships, we asked about the extent to which participating K-5 teachers increased their use of practices statistically linked to higher student scores on the 4th grade NAEP test. The following practices are associated with school factors that produce higher achievement for 4th graders:

- Teachers talk to students about their writing

4th graders who have this experience always or sometimes score higher than those who do not.

- Students plan their writing

4th graders who plan their writing in school and on tests score higher.

- Teachers or students keep student writing in a portfolio

4th graders who have this experience score higher than those who do not.

- Students talk about their writing with their family

The more frequently 4th graders do this, the higher their scores.

Finding: The majority of teachers participating in CWP partnerships report that they use, at least weekly, 3 of the 4 classroom practices that are correlated with higher achievement on the NAEP 4th grade writing assessment. Between 27% and 62% of participants say they increased their use of all 4 practices as a result of the CWP partnership.

The table below displays how frequently the CWP participants report using these practices and the percentage of teachers who increased the use of each practice as a result of the CWP partnership:

Table 3.
Impact on K-5 CWP participants' use of practices correlated with higher writing achievement

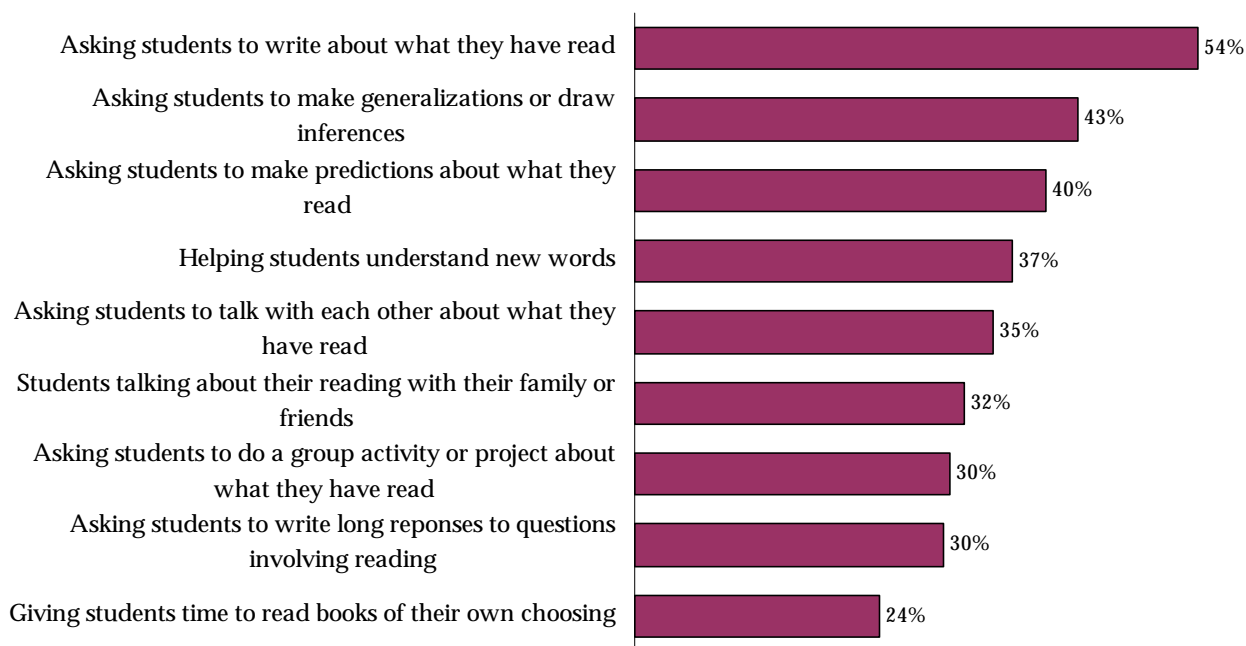
Teaching Practice	"How often I use this practice"			"I do this more often because of the CWP"
	1-2 times/ month	1-2 times/ week	daily	
Teachers talk to students about their writing	15%	50%	36%	62%
Teachers have students plan their writing	38%	42%	13%	56%
Teachers or students keep student writing in a portfolio	42%	33%	18%	45%
Have students talk about their writing with their family	56%	16%	15%	27%

◆ **How do CWP partnerships influence elementary teachers' classroom practices related to the teaching of reading?**

Finding: CWP partnerships have some influence on the K-5 participants' teaching of reading, though to a lesser degree than their influence on the teaching of writing. The strongest influence (54% increase) involves having students write about what they read. Between 30% and 43% of teachers have increased their use of strategies associated with reading skills *per se*, such as making predictions, drawing inferences, and learning new words.

The graph below displays the results:

Figure 6.
Percentage of K-5 teachers reporting more frequent use of practices that support reading development



Percentages represent teachers who marked "3" on a 3-point scale where "1" = "happens less often" and "3" = "happens more often."

◆ **How do CWP partnerships help K-5 teachers develop classroom practices that are associated with higher reading achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment?**

In 1998, the National Assessment of Educational Progress conducted a nation-wide assessment of reading in grades 4, 8 and 12. In 2000, another reading assessment was conducted in 4th grade only. For our study of CWP partnerships, we asked about the extent to which participating K-5 teachers increased their use of practices that reflect school factors statistically correlated with higher student scores on the 4th grade NAEP test.¹⁵ Of the 9 teaching practices identified above, 3 reflect school factors associated with higher achievement:

- Students read books of their own choosing

Students who do this daily have higher reading scores.

- Students talk about what they read with family and friends

Students who do this daily, weekly or monthly have higher scores than students who do not do this.

- Students write long responses to questions on assignments that involve reading

Students who do this weekly or monthly have higher reading scores.

¹⁵ Source: U.S. Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. National Center for Educational Statistics. *The NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States*, NCES 1999-459, by Donahue, P.L., Voelkl, K.E., Campbell, J.R., and Mazzeo, J. Washington, D.C.: 1999. For 2000 4th grade reading: *The Condition of Education*, academic outcomes, indicator 7: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2002/section2/indicator07.asp>

Finding: There is variation in the effect of CWP partnerships on K-5 teachers' use of classroom practices that are correlated with higher reading scores. Nearly every teacher in CWP partnerships has students read books of their own choosing daily or weekly, and more than 90% have their students talk with their family about their reading at least monthly. Between 24% and 32% of teachers increased these practices because of the CWP partnership. Of these K-5 teachers, 61% have students write long answers to assignments about reading at least once or twice a month, and 1 in 3 of these teachers increased their use of this practice because of the CWP partnership.

The table below displays how frequently the CWP participants report using these three reading practices and the percentage of teachers who use each practice more often as a result of participating in a CWP partnership:

Table 4.
Impact on K-5 CWP participants' use of practices correlated with higher reading achievement

Teaching Practice	"How often I use this practice"			"I do this more often because of the CWP"
	1-2 times/ month	1-2 times/ week	daily	
Have students read books of their own choosing	2%	16%	80%	24%
Have students talk about what they read with family and friends	36%	36%	21%	32%
Have students write long answers in response to reading*	30%	31%	5%	30%

We omit "never" from the frequency column here because, typically, fewer than 10% of teachers say they never use these practices; however, 34% of the teachers say they "never" have their K-5 students write long answers in assignments about reading.

Findings for Teachers in Grades 6-12

On the survey for teachers in grades 6-12, we asked about classroom practices that support the general development of writing. In addition, we asked about teaching practices that support what we refer to as "academic writing." By academic writing, we mean the genres, analytic strategies, voices, and levels of diction that students must master to prepare for success in colleges and universities in any discipline that requires writing. Just as with elementary grades, the teaching of writing in grades 6-

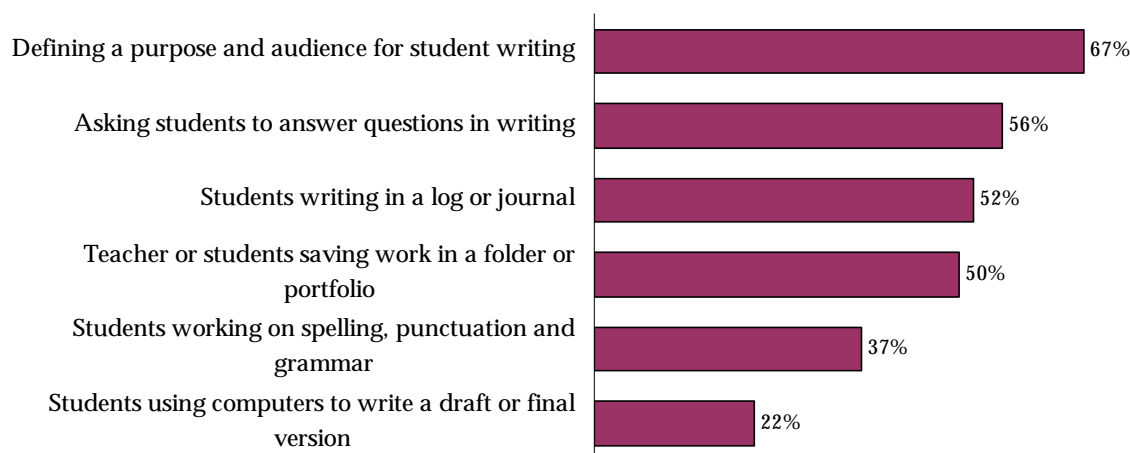
12 is connected to the teaching of reading; in the case of academic writing, the link is to the types of reading needed to prepare for success in college.

◆ **How do CWP partnerships influence secondary teachers' classroom practices related to the teaching of writing?**

Finding: For teachers in grades 6-12, participation in CWP partnerships has a notable influence on classroom practices for teaching writing. Between 50% and 67% of participants more often have students define a purpose for writing, use writing to learn and to demonstrate learning, and keep a portfolio of writing. Nearly 4 out of 10 teach spelling and other conventions of correctness more often because of the partnership.

The graph below shows the results:

Figure 7.
Percentage of secondary teachers reporting an increase in classroom practices that support the general development of writing



Percentages represent teachers who marked "3" on a 3-point scale where "1" = "happens less often" and "3" = "happens more often."

◆ **How does participation in CWP partnerships influence teachers' use of classroom practices that support the development of academic writing?**

Both the University of California and the California State University have strict writing standards that apply to entering freshmen, and both systems administer writing tests to ascertain whether freshmen qualify for regular university-level work. Both universities have also made substantial and long-term investments in communicating to students and to teachers about the nature of the writing tests and the scoring criteria.¹⁶ For both universities, students must be able to produce, on demand, an essay that makes a cogent and well-developed analysis or argument about a given topic, and must demonstrate command of sentence style, syntax, and conventions of usage. The UC examination also requires that students demonstrate the ability to read and respond analytically to a substantial passage of non-literary prose.¹⁷

On the survey for teachers of grades 6-12, we asked about the extent to which they have increased their use classroom practices that are associated with these academic standards.

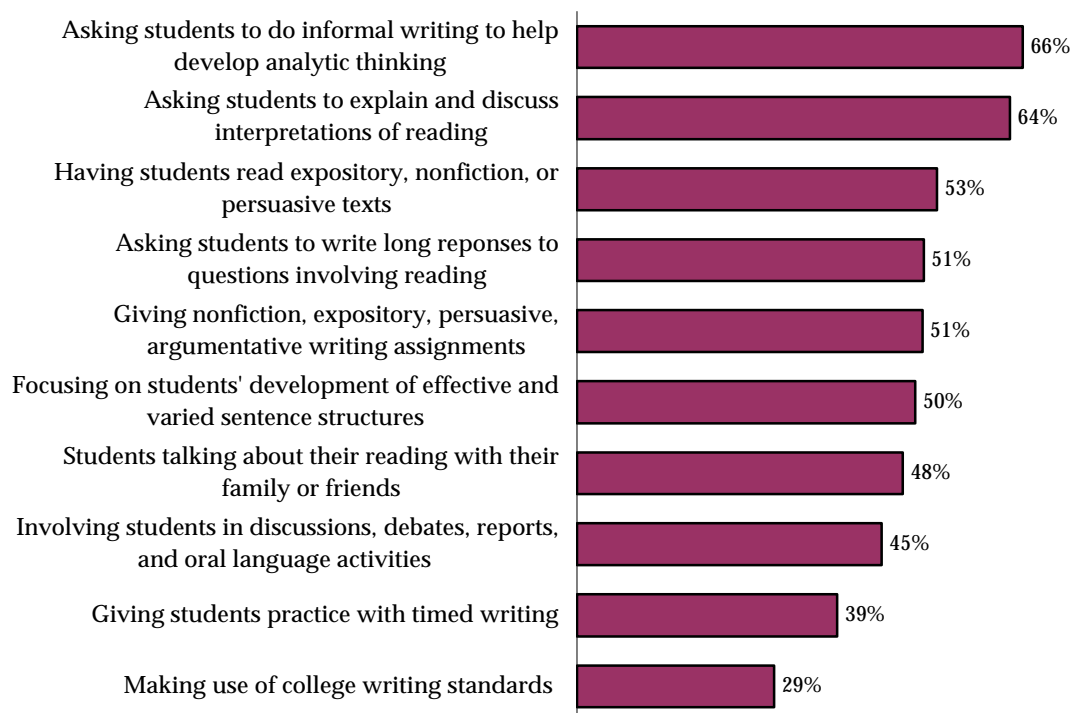
Finding: Participation in the CWP partnership has influenced many secondary level teachers' use of classroom practices that support development of academic writing. Between 50% and 66% of participants more often have students develop analytic thinking through writing, engage in both written and oral discussions of academic texts, practice writing in the academic genres, and focus on improvement of expository writing style. Between 29% and 39% of participants more often have their students practice writing essay tests and using college standards because of the CWP partnership.

The graph below displays the results:

¹⁶ See the website www.essayeval.org as one example.

¹⁷ Appendix C includes an excerpt from a statement of academic competencies expected of freshmen entering California colleges and universities.

Figure 8.
Percentage of secondary teachers reporting an increase in classroom practices related to academic writing



Percentages represent teachers who marked "3" on a 3-point scale where "1" = "happens less often" and "3" = "happens more often."

◆ **How do CWP partnerships help secondary teachers develop classroom practices that are associated with higher writing achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment?**

The 1998 NAEP writing assessment included both 8th and 12th grades. We examined the extent to which secondary teachers participating in CWP partnerships have increased their use of writing practices that produced higher scores for these students. The following practices included on the survey reflect school factors that are statistically correlated with higher student scores on the 8th and 12th grade NAEP writing assessment:¹⁸

¹⁸ Source: U.S. Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. National Center for Educational Statistics. *The NAEP 1998 Writing Report Card for the Nation and the States*, NCES 1999-462, by E.A. Greenwald, H.R. Persky, J.R. Campbell, and J. Mazzeo. Washington, D.C.: 1999. Pp 85-103.

- Teachers talk to students about their writing

8th and 12th graders who always or sometimes have this experience score higher than those who never do.

- The teacher or student defines an audience and purpose for writing

8th graders who define the audience once or twice a month score higher than those who never define an audience or who define an audience weekly or daily. For 12th grade, there was no statistical correlation.

- Students plan their writing

8th and 12th graders who plan their writing in school and on tests score higher.

- Teachers or students keep student writing in a portfolio

8th and 12th graders who have this experience score higher than those who do not.

- Students talk about their writing with their family

The more frequently 8th and 12th graders do this, the higher their scores.

- Students produce more than one draft

The more frequently 8th and 12th graders do this, the higher their scores.

- Student use a computer to write drafts or final versions

8th and 12th graders score higher when they use computers at least once a week or once or twice a month.

Finding: The majority of teachers in grades 6-12 report that they frequently use 6 of 7 classroom practices associated with higher NAEP writing scores. Further, between 50% and 67% of the participants report that, as a result of the CWP partnership, they have increased their use of 5 classroom practices where daily or weekly use is optimal.

The table below displays how frequently the CWP participants report using these practices and the extent to which their participation in the CWP partnership has increased their use of them:

Table 5.
Impact on 6-12 CWP participants' use of practices correlated with higher writing achievement

Teaching Practice	"How often I use this practice"*				"I do this more often because of the CWP"
	never	1-2 times/month	1-2 times/week	daily	
The teacher or student defines an audience and purpose for writing	9%	32%	43%	17%	67%
Teachers or students keep student writing in a portfolio	11%	34%	30%	25%	50%
Student use a computer to write drafts or final versions	20%	58%	19%	3%	22%
	never	sometimes	always		
Teachers talk to students about their writing	35%	21%	76%		65%
Students plan their writing	6%	26%	68%		61%
Students produce more than one draft	7%	28%	64%		59%
Students talk about their writing with their family	28%	69%	3%		26%

Our grades 6-12 survey included two scales for frequency because the NAEP student survey used two. We include the "never" column for grades 6-12 because these teachers select that choice significantly often.

◆ **How do CWP partnerships help secondary teachers develop classroom practices that are associated with higher reading achievement on the National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment?**

In 1998, the National Assessment of Educational Progress conducted a nation-wide assessment of reading in grades 4, 8 and 12. For our study of CWP partnerships, we asked about the extent to which participating teachers in grades 6-12 have increased their use of practices associated with higher achievement on the 8th and 12th grade reading test.¹⁹ Following are the practices that NAEP identified:

¹⁹ Source: U.S. Department of Education. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. National Center for Educational Statistics. *The NAEP 1998 Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States*, NCES 1999-459, by Donahue, P.L., Voelkl, K.E., Campbell, J.R., and Mazzeo, J. Washington, D.C.: 1999. For 2000 4th grade reading: *The Condition of Education*, academic outcomes, indicator 7: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2002/section2/indicator07.asp>

- Students explain their understanding and discuss interpretations of their reading

For grades 8 and 12, students who were asked to do this once a week or more had higher reading scores.

- Students write long responses to questions on assignments that involve reading

The more frequently students in both grades do this, the higher their scores.

- Students talk about what they read with family and friends

Students in both grades who do this at least weekly or monthly have higher scores than students who do this rarely or never.

Finding: The majority of teachers in grades 6-12 report frequent use of 2 of 3 three practices associated with higher NAEP reading scores. Further, between 48% and 64% teachers report that, as a result of the CWP partnership, they have increased use of all three practices.

The table below displays how frequently the CWP participants report using these practices and the extent to which their participation in the CWP partnership has increased their use of each practice:

Table 6.
Impact on 6-12 CWP participants' use of practices correlated with higher reading achievement

Teaching Practice	"How often I use this practice				"I do this more often because of the CWP"
	never	1-2 times/month	1-2 times/week	daily	
Students explain their understanding and discuss interpretations of their reading	2%	12%	47%	39%	64%
Students write long responses to questions on assignments that involve reading	9%	42%	43%	6%	51%
Students talk about what they read with family and friends	17%	33%	39%	11%	48%

VI. BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

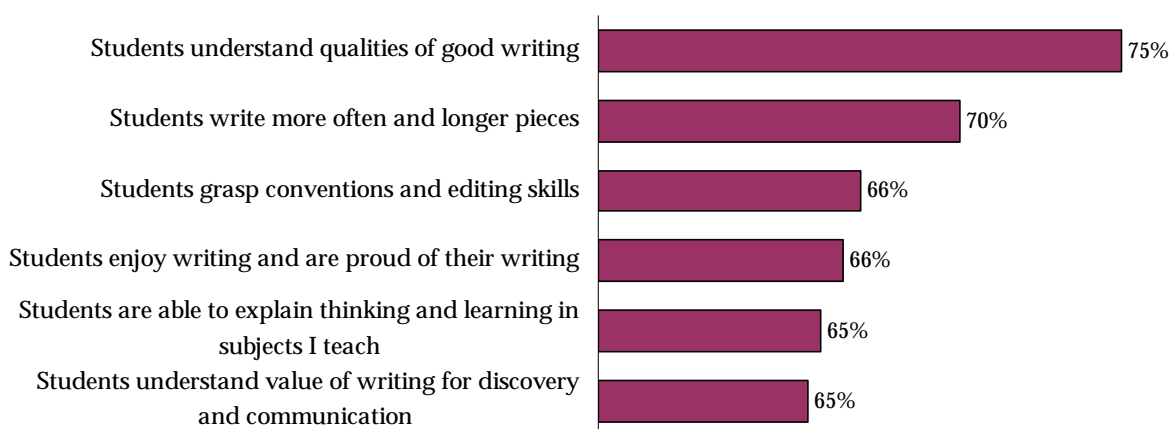
In our survey, we asked teachers of all grade levels to assess the extent to which their participation in the CWP partnership was ultimately beneficial to their students.

◆ How do students benefit as a result of their teachers' participation in CWP partnerships?

Finding: A substantial majority of participating teachers report that their participation in the CWP partnership has benefited their students. Across all grade levels, 75% of the teachers say that their students better understand the qualities of good writing; 70% say that their students write more often and write longer pieces because of their participation; and 65-66% of the teachers say their students have a better grasp of the conventions of written English, are more proud of their writing, are more able to explain their learning in writing, and have a better understanding of the value of writing.

The results are displayed in the graph below:

Figure 9.
Percentage of teachers reporting benefits of partnership involvement for their students (all grade levels)



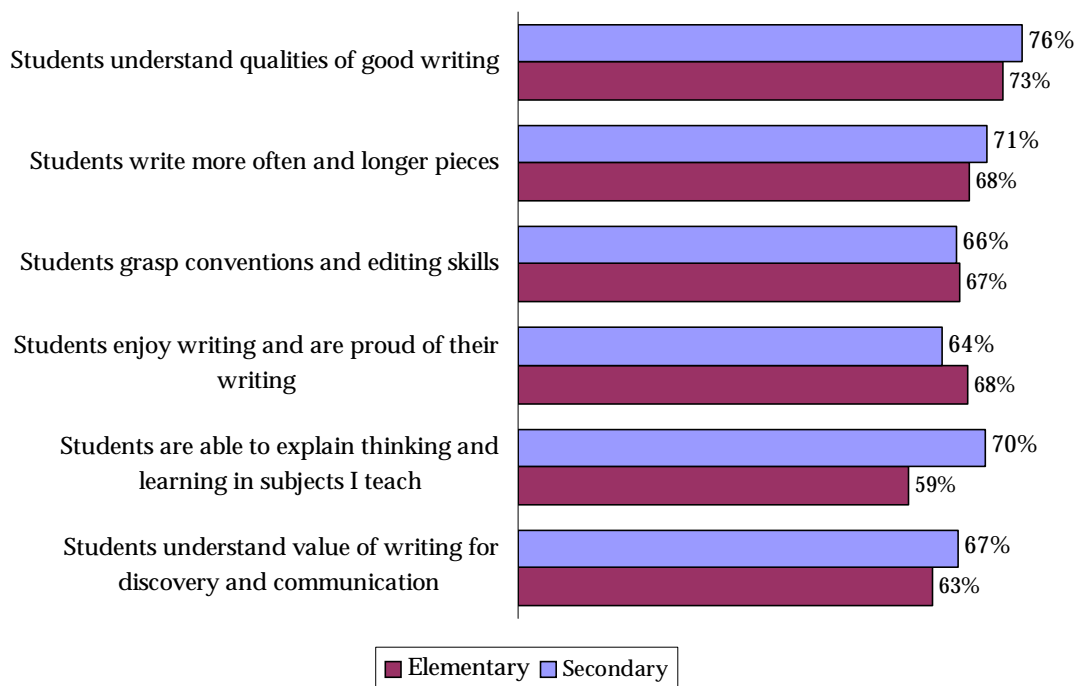
Percentages represent teachers who marked "4" or "5" on a 5-point scale where "1" = "disagree strongly" and "5" = "agree strongly."

◆ **How do the benefits to students compare across grade levels?**

Finding: Elementary and secondary teachers have very similar perceptions about the benefits to their students. A somewhat greater percentage of secondary teachers report that their students are more able to explain their thinking and learning in writing

The results are shown below:

Figure 10.
Percentage of teachers reporting benefits of partnership involvement for their students (comparisons by grade levels)



Percentages represent teachers who marked "4" or "5" on a 5-point scale where "1" = "disagree strongly" and "5" = "agree strongly."

VII. SUMMARY STATEMENT

CWP partnerships as a supportive context for professional development

For professional development to be both valuable and effective, it must be of high quality in two dimensions. First, the *content* of the professional development must provide teachers with knowledge and teaching skills that are *of educational significance* — i.e., that are known to support student learning, and that reflect the standards and expectations of the profession and of sound educational policy. Second, the professional development must be of sufficient *quality and value*, from teachers' perspectives, to have an *influence* on their classroom practices.

Taking the full set of survey findings into account, we can say that CWP partnerships appear to be a supportive structure and fruitful context for teachers' professional development, and further, that the professional development that is offered within CWP partnerships enables many teachers to enhance their teaching in ways that are consistent with research and the standards of public policy:

- ◆ In the context of its partnerships with schools, the CWP is offering professional development content that is of significance and value to the participating teachers and that many teachers believe is ultimately beneficial to their students.
- ◆ In CWP partnerships, teachers learn about classroom practices that are correlated with high achievement on assessments of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), and they learn about practices that are consistent with college and university standards for student competency in writing.
- ◆ Substantial proportions of participating teachers report that they are increasing their use of effective classroom practices as a result of their participation in the CWP partnership.

The benefits of long-term support for professional development

The California Writing Project evolved from the Bay Area Writing Project, which was founded nearly three decades ago. Over these years, the CWP has built a well-organized network of sites, each of which—as its *raison d'être*—has continuously developed and supported teacher leadership that is focused on the teaching and learning of writing. This leadership capacity—the cumulative knowledge, skills, and opportunities of the teacher-consultants of the sites—served as a reservoir from which the CWP network could draw in response to the new partnership initiative. In a sense, the CWP's creation of these partnerships was akin to adding rooms onto a well-designed house built on a solid foundation. Most of the partnerships we

studied began formally in 1999 or later. The promising results of this study speak to the advantage of bringing the resources of a mature and high-capacity project, such as the CWP, to bear on the challenge of improving teachers' in-school access to high quality professional development. By extension, the capacity of the CWP to respond to the partnership initiative – to build 146 partnerships within four years, and to demonstrate their value to teachers and students – speaks to the benefits that accrue from long-term local, state and federal support of the CWP network and its model.

Questions that would reward further study

Developing these partnerships required CWP site directors to make changes in how they invested their own time and the resources of their sites, including both funding and the leadership of teacher-consultants. The partnerships also broadened teachers' access to CWP resources. This study answers some questions, but raises others. For example:

– How do partnerships compare with other CWP contexts for professional development — for example, school inservice series that are not part of partnerships?

A comparative study of the efficacy of professional development in different contexts would help the CWP assess the value-added of the partnership strategy, and thus further understand the return on (or cost of) the investment of time and attention that partnerships require.

– What benefits — immediate and potential — do partnerships have beyond their offering teachers knowledge and skills that affect their classroom practice?

This survey focused on the role of CWP partnerships in influencing classroom practice, and on benefits to individual teachers and their students. CWP partnerships, however, involve other kinds of activities, such as help with grant-writing and participation in school planning. These activities might well produce important outcomes of a different kind.

Studies aimed at these questions would produce better understanding of the costs and benefits of CWP involvement in partnerships, and shed further light on the capacity and potential of the CWP network to support improvement in teaching.

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