

**The Impact of the New York City Writing Project:  
Teacher and Student Outcomes  
of a  
Professional Development Model  
for Improving the Teaching of Writing**

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# **The Impact of the New York City Writing Project: Teacher and Student Outcomes of a Professional Development Model for Improving the Teaching of Writing**

## **Executive Summary**

This study investigates the impact of a partnership between the New York City Writing Project (NYCWP) and six high schools in a large urban district where challenges include poverty, low student achievement, inexperienced teachers, and increasing demands for high-stakes testing. NYCWP had worked from one to five years in each of these schools, offering support through teacher-consultants and graduate seminars, both onsite. This report presents findings from Phase One of a two-year study, conducted in 2004–2005.

The research examined how the NYCWP professional development model supports teachers' growth and, consequently, how it affects student writing outcomes, particularly for students who face challenges when writing in English. The study compares data from two sets of teachers and their students in grades 9–12. Eight program group teachers participated in the NYCWP professional development program at their school sites; three comparison group teachers—from a school with similar demographics—did not have access to NYCWP professional development. The students of teachers from both groups were more than 90% African American or Hispanic; ELL students made up 38% of the program group and 46% of the comparison group. The analysis of teachers' growth relied primarily on interviews and surveys about instructional practices and attitudes. Program and comparison group students' growth in writing was measured by pre and post assessments of student writing samples, written to a prompt drawn from an archive of established writing prompts. The samples were independently assessed at a national scoring conference.

Program group teachers reported adopting views and practices drawn from NYCWP professional development. They called upon NYCWP teacher-consultants to address specific needs, and tried new strategies in their classrooms. They reported treating writing as a process, employing prewriting techniques, and engaging students in responding to each other's writing. Program group teachers in content areas other than English reported incorporating writing into their instructional practice. Comparison group teachers, on the other hand, felt that their professional development was less useful in their classroom practice, and employed writing strategies less consistently. Six case studies (of four program and two comparison group teachers) are presented in this report to illustrate the effect of the NYCWP on teacher growth.

Program group students' writing scores increased more than comparison group students' scores on the holistic and all six analytic measures. In six of the seven measures ("sentence fluency" being the only exception), all differences between program and comparison students' growth were statistically significant. Subgroup analyses for ELL students demonstrated a similar pattern: program group students' scores increased more

than comparison group students' on all measures. With the exception of "sentence fluency" and "word choice," differences between program and comparison group ELL students were statistically significant. In the comparison group, with the exception of "word choice," both ELL and non-ELL students' scores either stayed the same or decreased between pre and post assessments.

The researchers caution that the small number of comparison group teachers makes it difficult to draw inferences about the extent and manner of using writing in non-NYCWP classrooms. Nonetheless, the significant growth in program group students' writing points to some important implications of this study. The increase in writing scores of students in history and science classes validates the program's effects in those contexts, and further suggests that using writing across the curriculum itself might have a positive effect on students' writing achievement. The increase in ELL program group students' scores, even when students were taught by less-experienced teachers, suggests that focusing on writing as a process, and introducing writing strategies that take into account students' learning needs, can benefit all students including those for whom writing in English is a challenge.

# **The Impact of the New York City Writing Project: Teacher and Student Outcomes of a Professional Development Model for Improving the Teaching of Writing**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The New York City Writing Project (NYCWP) is a professional development program of the Institute for Literacy Studies at Lehman College, The City University of New York. The primary components of the NYCWP's model for professional development are on-site consulting and graduate seminars. Because the NYCWP believes that writing is essential to learning across the curriculum, the model is designed to serve both new and experienced staff across disciplines and particular constituencies, including teachers of English language learners (ELL), special education, and career and technology subjects, as well as teachers in alternative schools.

Teacher-consultants serve as a fulcrum in the work lives of teachers who participate in NYCWP school-year programs. NYCWP teacher-consultants provide on-site assistance by working directly with teachers on a weekly basis and by conducting after-school seminars, held at school sites, on the teaching of writing, reading, and other literacies. In addition to years of academic training and classroom experience, consultants bring to their work expertise in many areas, including English language learning, special education, materials and resource development, and curriculum design.

In fall 2004, the NYCWP began a two-year research initiative to study the impact of its professional development model for the teaching of writing. This study, which considered a sample of high school teachers and their students, focused particularly on outcomes for students who face special challenges when writing in English. The first phase of this study was conducted between September 2004 and July 2005; the second phase began in September 2005. This report presents findings from work conducted during Phase One.

## **THE NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT**

### **Scope**

Established in 1978 as a local site of the National Writing Project, the NYCWP is part of a network of more than 189 university-based professional development programs throughout the country dedicated to improving the teaching of writing and enhancing teacher professionalism. The New York City Writing Project's mission, like that of the NWP, is to strengthen literacy instruction in K–12 classrooms and promote the use of writing as a tool for learning, thinking, and communicating in all disciplines. By collaborating with teachers and schools, the NYCWP seeks to transform the ways in which writing is perceived, taught, and evaluated in urban classrooms.

The NYCWP has implemented and refined its model for 27 years in K–12 public schools serving large numbers of low-income and low-achieving students. Services target

primarily middle and high school teachers in all five boroughs of New York City; a significant number of these teachers is situated in the Bronx. In all, more than 12,000 teachers with responsibilities to 250,000 students have taken part in seminars, workshops, graduate courses, and special programs sponsored by NYCWP.

### **Approach to Professional Development**

The NYCWP's approach to professional development is based on a "teachers-teaching-teachers" philosophy that recognizes the importance of teacher knowledge, expertise, and leadership. This approach emphasizes situating teachers' learning in their own writing and classroom practices rather than on developing extensive curricular materials for either teachers or facilitators (Borko 2004). It is an approach that values the experience that 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.

To achieve the goal of improving writing instruction in K–12 classrooms, the NYCWP works from a belief that teachers are key agents for transforming how writing is perceived, practiced, and assessed in urban classrooms. The NYCWP also believes that student writing improves when students are supported by teachers who encourage them to write for authentic purposes in a variety of genres.

Given these premises, the NYCWP's model for professional development is based on two mutually reinforcing components:

#### ***On-site consulting and support***

On-site teacher-consultants are at the center of the NYCWP's work. The primary function of teacher-consultants is to facilitate professional growth in partnership with teachers, who may take advantage of both informal and formal forms of support. Developing stable, long-term relationships with teachers—at least two years—in the context of their schools is of paramount importance. Consultants typically spend one to four days per week in participating teachers' schools, offering various forms of assistance including (but not limited to) one-on-one mentoring to develop lessons and projects; coaching and modeling in classrooms; team-teaching; recommending materials and resources; reviewing student work; introducing writing strategies such as revision and editing; critical response to texts and student writing; counsel on the use of small-group/whole-class activities; and outreach and counsel to interdisciplinary teams, department heads, coaches, assistant principals, and principals.

#### ***Graduate seminars***

NYCWP teacher-consultants also lead graduate seminars for groups of teachers of all subject areas, staff developers, coaches, and administrators from a school or network of schools. The 45-hour seminars are offered as a 12-session series after the school day or on Saturdays. Most seminars are conducted at school sites; some are offered at Lehman College. These seminars are designed to promote study of and discourse about the theory and practice of writing. Seminars provide participants with opportunities to explore various aspects of the writing process—such as drafting, proofreading, revising, and editing—and consider how student writing can be assessed. Participants develop greater

understanding of the ways in which writing can be used as a tool for thinking and learning across the curriculum, and how it can support reading comprehension of both literature and content-area texts. Differentiated learning is addressed to help teachers focus on specific needs of diverse student populations, including ELL and special education students. Participants also reflect on their own practice, share and analyze student work and assignments, and implement seminar activities and approaches in their own classrooms or in their roles as literacy coaches or administrators.

### **Implementing the NYCWP Model in the Local Context**

New York City public schools educate about one-third of the students in New York State—and more children than in public schools in 46 other states (Stiefel et al 2000). The City’s public education system is made up of about 1,500 schools, 100,000 teachers, and 1.1 million students. The Bronx is home to roughly 285 schools, where some 20,000 teachers serve 192,000 students. Among the five boroughs, the Bronx has the largest proportion of adults without a high school diploma and the greatest proportion of school-age children. The mean income for families in the Bronx is lower than in any other borough.

The NYCWP has had a longstanding commitment to providing services in high-need schools. The present study was conducted in Bronx high schools, where the challenges of poverty, inexperienced teaching, and low student achievement are particularly acute. Eighty-five percent of teachers in Bronx high schools have three or fewer years of teaching experience, and roughly one quarter of all students who enter Bronx high schools have left the eighth grade without having met current academic standards.

The New York City Department of Education has instituted three significant reforms in recent years: administrative and school units were restructured in 2003; standardized curriculum in language arts and mathematics were implemented in K–12 schools throughout the city; and the movement to reconfigure large high schools into small ones accelerated. Effects of these changes are evident in schools where the NYCWP works. The reorganization consolidated 32 community school districts into a geographic system made up of 10 regions with about 120 schools serving approximately 132,000 students per region. The Bronx is composed of Regions 1 and 2. For purposes of this study, teachers from six Region 2 high schools volunteered to participate in the NYCWP’s professional development program.

Several factors motivated us to evaluate the NYCWP’s impact in Region 2 at the high school level. Turnover of administrators and teachers in Region 2 high schools continues to be a serious problem; many of the schools have been reconfigured as small schools and are still in the process of becoming fully enrolled and staffed—factors that detract from their ability to focus on professional development. Many students in Bronx high schools do not have the same teacher for two consecutive semesters. In addition, demands for student achievement on city and state writing assessments and other forms of high-stakes testing persist. We hoped this study would offer an important means for determining our impact on teachers’ experiences—as novices or veterans—with low-income and low-performing students, and with large numbers of students with special needs.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS, DESIGN, AND METHODS**

### **Research Questions**

This research initiative investigated the impact of the NYCWP's approach to professional development on a sample of high school teachers and their students over a period of two years. Relationships that NYCWP teacher-consultants have with teachers are unique and proceed according to the needs and experience level of individual teachers and the subject area(s) and type(s) of courses a teacher is teaching. Relationships also proceed according to the degree of openness that teachers bring to the professional development experience.

In general, however, teacher-consultants share certain expectations about the effects of their work with teachers. These expectations, in conjunction with the beliefs and goals of the NYCWP, led us to assume that a study of the influence of NYCWP professional development would confirm the following:

- that the teacher-consultants helped teachers to develop specific strategies to meet specific teacher and student needs
- that a variety of strategies were used, across a variety of content areas
- that teachers were willing to try new strategies in their classrooms
- that teachers developed a greater appreciation of the value of writing.

In light of these assumptions, the present study sought to answer two questions:

- In what specific ways does the NYCWP's approach to professional development support teachers' growth?
- How does the NYCWP's approach to professional development affect student writing outcomes?

### **Research Design**

The study, based on a quasi-experimental design, compares two sets of teachers:

#### ***Program group***

Twenty-three teachers from six Bronx high schools—referred to as the program group—volunteered to participate in NYCWP professional development. Eleven of the 23 had prior exposure to the work of the NYCWP, and 12 had little or no prior exposure. Program group teachers had access to some or all components of the NYCWP model during the 2004–05 school year. Data are also presented on 78 of their students: 57 of the 78 students were in their freshman and/or sophomore year; 19 of the 78 were English language learners.

#### ***Comparison group***

Three teachers from a Manhattan high school volunteered to be part of a comparison group during the 2004–05 school year. The comparison group did not have any exposure to the NYCWP during the current study. Two comparison group teachers had attended a one-day staff-development workshop conducted by NYCWP presenters two years prior

to this study, but they did not have access to NYCWP on-site consulting or graduate seminars. Data are also presented on 39 of their students: 25 were in their junior or senior year; 18 of the 39 were English language learners.

***School selection*** (see appendix 1)

Program group schools were selected because the composition of their student populations and teaching force mirrored that of most Bronx high schools. Given the NYCWP's longstanding commitment to serving high-need schools, we sought program group schools with a high proportion of low-income students (measured by free-lunch status). Program group schools reflected the diversity of New York City schools in terms of enrollments, staffing, and the number of English language learners (ELL). Like New York City schools, program group schools also varied in their years of experience with the NYCWP.

The program group schools included four small and two large high schools, each with student enrollments ranging from 214 to 3,491 students. Average enrollment across the six program group schools was 1,359 students; approximately 19% were ELL students. The majority of students across the six schools were African American or Hispanic, and most were eligible for free lunch. Relatively high numbers of students in program group schools regularly do not pass the New York State Regents exam. The NYCWP had worked in these six schools for one to five years each prior to implementation of this study.

The comparison group school, a large high school located in the borough of Manhattan with a total enrollment of 2,051 students, also had a high proportion of African American and Hispanic students; 16% of all students in this school were English language learners, and close to two-thirds of all students were eligible for free lunch. The majority of students in the comparison group school regularly do not pass the New York State Regents exam. The NYCWP had not worked in this school for two years when the study began. None of the comparison group teachers had had access to the NYCWP's formal approach to professional development.

***Teacher characteristics*** (see appendix 2)

Program and comparison group teachers were recruited on a voluntary basis. All teachers gave informed consent to be involved in the research.

**Program group.** Roughly half of the 23 program group teachers had at least five years' teaching experience; only one-third of them had been teaching at their current school for five or more years. The program group taught a range of subject areas: language arts/social studies; English; English as a second language; math/science; history; and special education. During Phase One of this study, program group teachers experienced NYCWP's inservice professional development in various ways: 65% worked only with an on-site consultant for the entire year; 17% participated in graduate seminars for two semesters and worked with an on-site consultant for the entire year; 13% participated in a graduate seminar and received on-site consulting in spring 2005 only; and 5% participated in a graduate seminar for two semesters.

**Comparison group.** All three of the comparison group teachers had more than five years' teaching experience and had been teaching at their current school for more than five years. Two teachers taught English as a second language and one taught language arts. None of the teachers in this group had access to NYCWP on-site consulting or graduate seminars during the 2004–05 school year or previously.

***Student characteristics***

Data analyzed in this report pertain only to those students who provided parental consent: 42 students of program group teachers and 39 students of comparison group teachers.

Individual data on the ethnicity of the program group student sample were not collected. Overall, an average of 94% of the students in program group schools were of African American or Hispanic descent; 95% of students in the comparison group school were from these backgrounds. It is extremely likely that the ethnic composition of students in the program and comparison group samples is proportionate to the general populations of the sample schools.

**Table 1  
ELL/non-ELL Students by Group**

	<b>Program Group</b>	<b>Comparison Group</b>
<b>ELL</b>	19 ( 24%)	18 ( 46%)
<b>Non-ELL</b>	59 ( 76%)	21 ( 54%)
<b>Total</b>	78 (100%)	39 (100%)

**Table 2  
Students by Level by Group**

	<b>Program Group</b>	<b>Comparison Group</b>
<b>Freshman</b>	31 ( 40%)	3 ( 8%)
<b>Sophomore</b>	26 ( 33%)	6 ( 15%)
<b>Junior</b>	14 ( 18%)	3 ( 8%)
<b>Senior</b>	7 ( 9%)	22 ( 56%)
<b>Missing</b>	0 ( 0%)	5 ( 13%)
<b>Total</b>	78 (100%)	39 (100%)

**Methods**

Multiple methods were used to collect data from program and comparison group teachers and their students. Because the majority of students in both groups did not have the same teacher for a full year, data were collected for all groups at the beginning and end of the spring 2005 semester. The data included:

1. student timed responses to writing prompts (appendix 3a and 3b);
2. teacher assignments and student work corresponding to these assignments;

3. written surveys (appendix 4) and interviews (appendix 5) with program and comparison teachers; and
4. written surveys (appendix 6) from students of program and comparison group teachers to assess their attitudes about writing.

Each of these is explained in detail below.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of Data Collection: Phase One**

	<b>Program Group</b>	<b>Comparison Group</b>
<b>Phase 1 Teachers</b>	23	3
<b>Phase 1 Students</b>	78	39
<b>Early Spr 05 Prompts Scored</b>	42	39
<b>Late Spr 05 Prompts Scored</b>	42	39
<b>Teacher Assignments Collected</b>	11	0
<b>Pieces of Student Work Collected</b>	31	0
<b>Early Spr 05 Teacher Surveys Completed</b>	23	3
<b>Late Spr 05 Teacher Surveys Completed</b>	21	3
<b>Early Spr 05 Student Surveys Collected</b>	74	39
<b>Late Spr 05 Student Surveys Collected</b>	37	39

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

#### ***Timed writing prompts***

Two writing prompts derived from the National Writing Project’s archive were administered in a pre/post fashion during one class period at two points during the school year. For each administration, students had 40 minutes to prewrite and respond to the prompt. The first prompt called for persuasive writing, and the second for narrative/expository writing.

A total of 81 students completed both the baseline (prompt A) on-demand writing sample and the follow-up (prompt B) writing sample during spring 2005. Of these, 42 were students of program group teachers who experienced NYCWP on-site consulting during spring 2005, and 39 were students of comparison group teachers who did not have any contact with the NYCWP.

An independent evaluator collected the completed samples. Samples were scored at a national conference along with writing samples from five other NWP sites in June 2005. The scoring used a modified version of the Six+1 Trait Writing Model (Bellamy 2005). This evaluative framework includes a rubric measuring six attributes of students’ writing:

- Ideas/Content Development—establishing purpose, selecting and integrating ideas, including details to support, develop, or illustrate ideas

- Organization—creating an opening and closing, maintaining focus, ordering and relating events, ideas, details to provide coherence and unity in the writing
- Voice—communicating in an engaging and expressive manner, revealing the writer’s stance toward the subject
- Sentence Fluency—constructing sentences to convey meaning, controlling syntax, creating variety in sentence length and type
- Word Choice—choosing words and expressions for appropriateness, precision, and variety
- Conventions—controlling grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and paragraphing.

The researchers determined that the Six+1 Trait Writing Model, while sufficiently comprehensive, required certain modifications to make it more appropriate for research use. The following modifications were made in the rubric 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 traits was clarified to enhance the reliability of evaluative judgments
- The evaluative judgments were modified to focus exclusively upon the student’s 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).

The scorers participated in six hours of training at the beginning of the scoring conference. The 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). All of the 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, program or comparison group, or time of administration). Overall, reliabilities (measured as interrater agreement, defining agreement as two scores that were identical or within one single score point of each other) ranged from 90% to 95%, with an aggregate across all scores of 92%. (See appendix 8 for complete analysis of the reliability of the scoring of student writing). Of the papers from students in high school—which included all of the student samples reported in this research project—10% were scored twice so that reliability could be calculated. All scores were double entered independently and the files compared. The resolution of all discrepancies produced a highly accurate data file, which we used in our analysis.

### ***Classroom practice and teacher experience***

Two writing samples and the accompanying assignment were collected from classes of all program group teachers, in order to assess the extent to which teachers saw writing as a process and promoted the use of writing for various purposes. Samples and the accompanying assignment were not collected from comparison group teachers.

### ***Teacher surveys and interviews***

To provide insight into perspectives about professional development and instructional approaches to writing, program and comparison group teachers were surveyed and interviewed at the beginning and end of the spring 2005 semester. The instruments focused on teachers' prior professional development experiences, the ways in which teachers used writing in their classrooms, the types of assignments they generated for students, and the extent to which they believed writing related to student achievement. (see appendices 4 and 5).

NYCWP teacher-consultants conducted the baseline interview with each teacher in the program group. An independent evaluator conducted interviews with comparison group teachers at both time points, and one follow-up interview with program group teachers. All interviewers used the same interview protocol. The interviews were tape recorded, and all responses were transcribed and analyzed by the independent evaluator. The independent evaluator coded the transcripts of the teacher interviews based on the system of an analytic taxonomy developed by NYCWP professional staff in consultation with the national office of the NWP (appendix 7). Analysis of the coded transcripts was carried out using the NVivo qualitative analysis program.

Teacher surveys were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package to tabulate and interpret responses.

### ***Student attitude surveys***

To assess students' attitudes about writing, a questionnaire was administered to students in program and comparison group teachers' classrooms at the beginning and end of the spring 2005 semester. Because this instrument was to be administered to many students for whom English was a second language, we used a questionnaire that had previously been designed by the Southern Nevada Writing Project, for ESL students. This quantitative instrument assesses students' perceptions of themselves as writers, their attitudes about writing, and the frequency with which they use different aspects of the writing process. The data were entered and analyzed by the independent evaluator using the SPSS statistical package.

The multiple-method approach used for data collection and analysis provided a range of information about the ways in which the NYCWP's model for professional development supports teachers' growth and affects student writing development. These methods also allowed for thoughtful consideration of the conditions that contribute to or detract from effective professional development and student progress.

## **RESULTS**

### **Effects of Teacher Interactions with the Teacher-Consultants**

The teacher interviews were examined to see whether there was any evidence that

- teacher-consultants helped teachers to develop specific strategies to meet specific teacher and student needs
- a variety of strategies were used, across a variety of content areas

- teachers were willing to try new strategies in their classrooms
- teachers developed a greater appreciation of the value of writing.

Survey data were not used in this section, as they did not bear directly on teachers' experiences with professional development.

### ***Specific strategies for specific needs***

Interviews with program teachers provide evidence that teachers did approach the teacher-consultants in order to address specific needs, and that the teacher-consultants attempted to provide strategies specific to these needs. For example, one teacher said she had a problem motivating her students to write. She said that the teacher-consultant “provided questions that were stimulating for students. She also modeled teaching strategies for me.” The teacher used one of these strategies in the classroom, and “it worked like a charm.” Teachers from both the science and math content areas said that the teacher-consultants introduced them to the use of minilessons in order to stimulate the students to write about the results of their research. A language arts teacher said she had used her interaction with the teacher-consultant to encourage conceptual development in her students. She said,

*Prior to involvement with the NYCWP, it was never part of my teaching to have students stop in the middle of reading and make connections. . . . I have found that making connections allows them [the students] to be better writers . . . they get a focus on their own experience in their writing.*

### ***Various strategies in various content areas***

We found evidence that teacher-consultants encouraged the use of a variety of strategies in a range of content areas. In addition to the above examples, a history teacher said that he used “point-of-view” writing in his classroom as a result of his interaction with the NYCWP. A science teacher said that as a result of working with the teacher-consultant, she used prewriting techniques such as responding to drawings more than she had previously; she also used drafting in order to have her students pay closer attention to the task at hand. A language arts teacher said that she used freewriting and journaling in order to encourage reluctant writers to write more frequently.

### ***Willingness to try new strategies***

Generally, program group teachers were willing to try new strategies to support their students in writing. (Indeed, it would have been surprising were they not, since they approached the teacher-consultants in order to get help to deal with their specific teaching needs.) Two teachers—who said that they essentially had had no strategies for teaching writing prior to participation in the NYCWP—began using strategies such as introducing the steps of the writing process and incorporating more journal-writing and reflection. As mentioned above, teachers in math and science introduced minilessons, which one said gave “students a different view of writing from a technical perspective.” Another teacher introduced prewriting techniques such as writing letters to historical characters and analyzing photographs. When asked what was most valuable about participation in NYCWP professional development, one teacher noted,

*the nonthreatening way the TC [teacher-consultant] helped me to get students to critique each other's papers. By [the TC's] being in the classroom with me, I gained more confidence in practicing certain things more often.*

Finally, participants experimented with new ways to collaborate: at one school, teachers were introduced to—and used—the concept of team teaching. Several teachers commented that they valued the opportunity to share ideas with, and learn from, their colleagues.

### ***Appreciation of the value of writing***

Generally, program group teachers appreciated the value of increasing writing in their classrooms. One teacher saw that the increased variety of writing encouraged by the NYCWP had helped her students to connect with the text:

*Involvement in the NYCWP helped me move away from the five-paragraph essay and toward a greater variety of genres, including persuasive writing . . . it really makes sense to have students make a connection to the text and write about their experiences. They are more enthusiastic when they are sharing something that comes from within them.*

Another teacher also saw the value of writing as a conceptual tool:

*I now see writing as a process and encourage my students to go through the process of writing—rereading and revising and editing their work. . . . By doing this, students view writing as something more than a sentence they've written . . . [they] experience it as an exploration of the thought that goes into it.*

A science teacher expressed her new awareness of the value of writing as a means of synthesizing scientific information:

*Without the NYCWP, I would have had a lot less writing in my curriculum. . . . A lot of the reflection and synthesis of information that I had my students write about came directly from things I did in conjunction with the teacher-consultant.*

In contrast, while comparison group teachers indicated that they valued some of their past professional development, they generally said that it did not address their specific needs. Consequently, they often did not apply any of the strategies they learned through professional development. One comparison teacher described some of the professional development she had experienced as “infantilizing.” Another said that the writing strategies she applied in her classroom, and which she found valuable, did not result from professional development, but from her own experience as a teacher. However, the third comparison group teacher did say that she was beginning to use freewriting more in her classroom, and she was doing this as a result of her experience with professional development. She also noted that the freewriting was helping her students become less resistant to writing, which was helping them to write more.

## Case Studies

This section presents data gathered from six teachers (four program group teachers and two comparison group teachers) and their students, in order to illustrate ways in which the NYCWP affected teacher practice. The six teachers were chosen, in part, because all had students who, in addition to providing parental consent for use of their data, had completed both on-demand writing prompts over the course of one semester (see “Student outcomes” below). In addition, two of the program group teachers and the two comparison group teachers were chosen because they were, to some extent, equivalent, particularly in terms of years of teaching experience and content area taught. However, any conclusions about NYCWP effects from comparisons of these teachers must be drawn with caution, since they do not match in every respect, and the small sample size of three comparison group teachers provided a highly restricted range from which to draw conclusions.

These six brief case studies illustrate results in relation to three areas of hypothesized program impact:

1. Writing should increasingly be seen by teachers and their students as a process involving prewriting, drafting, revision, redrafting, and editing.
2. Student interaction, in particular students sharing their writing with peers and obtaining feedback from them, should increase.
3. An increase in writing across the curriculum should be encouraged and sustained.

The six teachers, whose names have been changed to preserve confidentiality, were

1. **Marlene**, a program group teacher with 20 years’ teaching experience and sustained exposure to the NYCWP, taught English language learners in grades 9–12.
2. **Natalie**, a comparison group teacher with more than 20 years’ teaching experience, taught English language learners in grades 9–12. Natalie had been exposed to innumerable forms of professional development over the years, including a staff development workshop conducted by the NYCWP in 2000–01.
3. **Carmen**, a program group teacher with less than five years’ teaching experience and no prior exposure to the NYCWP, taught language arts in grades 9–12.
4. **Ophelia**, a comparison group teacher with more than 20 years’ teaching experience, taught language arts in grades 9–12. She had attended a one-day staff development workshop on journal writing conducted by an NYCWP teacher-consultant during 2000–01.
5. **Aurora**, a program group teacher with less than five years’ teaching experience, taught science in the grades 9 and 10. She had worked with an NYCWP on-site consultant prior to this study.
6. **Peter**, a program group teacher with six years’ teaching experience and sustained exposure to the NYCWP, taught history in grades 9 and 10.

### *Writing as a process*

**Marlene - program group teacher.** During her initial interview, Marlene said she liked the fact that the NYCWP “viewed writing as a process . . . and allowed students to just free-flowingly write.” Marlene stated specifically that she and her students now went

through the whole process of writing: prewriting, drafting, sharing with peers, rereading, revising, and editing. She also valued the fact that the teacher-consultant encouraged her to share her own writing with students and have them share their writing among peers—strategies that she adopted and used in her classroom.

The sample of student writing that Marlene provided also emphasized the process of writing. She asked her students to make revisions by using response groups to engage them in active listening and questioning. For editing, she advised her students to brainstorm possible errors and work in pairs to critique each other's work. The student writing samples show evidence of prewriting (listing), drafting, redrafting, and revising.

Her survey responses also corroborated the claims she made in her interview that she viewed writing as a process and encouraged her students to engage in that process. According to their survey responses, 44% of Marlene's students said they engaged in prewriting activities weekly; 31% said they edited or revised their writing daily. These data are consistent with Marlene's claims about valuing the writing process.

**Natalie - comparison group teacher.** When asked at her initial interview if she thought her teaching practice had changed as a result of professional development, Natalie said that when she was being observed in class, she tended to teach according to whatever new method was being promulgated. When she was on her own, she would revert to her old methods of teaching. In general, she said, her prior experiences with professional development had not provided her with coherent teaching strategies. She did say that she used "free-writes with students" and let them "witness their own capacity for output." However, on the basis of her initial interview, it did not appear that she viewed freewriting as part of an ongoing writing process but rather as a discrete activity. Natalie's interviews yielded no clear indication that she viewed writing as a process.

Her survey responses did, however, indicate that she used some *elements* of the writing process. She said she sometimes employed prewriting and drafting and used revision and editing strategies very often. The survey responses of Natalie's students supported her claims that she used revision and editing frequently. Fifty-three percent of Natalie's students indicated that they revised/edited their writing on a daily basis. In addition, 43% said they used prewriting techniques at least on a weekly basis, lending some support to Natalie's survey response that she sometimes used prewriting. Based on the results from her survey and those of her students, it may be that Natalie views writing as a process and uses the elements of the writing process in a more coherent and consistent way than she indicated in her interviews. The results from the interviews on the one hand and the surveys on the other are inconclusive.

### ***Writing and student interaction***

**Carmen - program group teacher.** During her follow-up interview, Carmen said that as a result of working with the NYCWP teacher-consultant, she had introduced more freewriting into her classroom. In addition, the teacher-consultant had taught her how to get students to critique one another's papers in a nonthreatening way. Her students shared their work more. Carmen also thought that the introduction of freewriting into her classes

had encouraged extremely reluctant writers to write, sometimes in vast quantities. She also introduced another strategy, called read-alouds. She noticed that her students really enjoyed hearing what their classmates had written.

Carmen's follow-up survey responses indicated that she employed all the elements of the process of writing, including sharing with peers, very often. Thirty-three percent of her students said, when surveyed, that they discussed their writing with their classmates at least on a weekly basis. There are indications, both from her follow-up interview and the survey responses, that Carmen was encouraging student interaction around writing.

**Ophelia - comparison group teacher.** During her follow-up interview, Ophelia claimed that she was using a lot more journal writing, revision, and student sharing in her classes. However, she said that her use of these activities was based on her own experience and not on professional development. In her survey responses, she said that she sometimes used peer response as part of the writing process. However, her students indicated that they did not discuss their writing with a classmate very often; 14% said they discussed writing with their peers at least weekly. Although Ophelia used more student sharing of writing than she had previously, she did not attribute this increase to her participation in any professional development.

### ***Writing across the curriculum***

The following two teachers were both members of the program group. One was a science teacher, and the other was a history teacher. These cases demonstrate that the NYCWP had an effect on teachers of content areas other than English or language arts. There were no comparable teachers in the comparison group.

**Aurora - program group science teacher.** During her initial interview, Aurora noted that her one-to-one work with the NYCWP teacher-consultant was most valuable. She learned, for example, how to use a specific textbook in her class. She also learned to “rework the text to make it accessible to my students.” She and the teacher-consultant also figured out a way to incorporate reflection and summary writing into science classes. She said that had it not been for the NYCWP teacher-consultant, she would have had a lot less writing and a lot less reflection in her curriculum. She thought the introduction of more writing into her classes had helped her students to read, interpret, and summarize scientific information. Furthermore, she thought that students' writing had helped her to see whether they had understood the concepts she was trying to teach.

During her follow-up interview, Aurora explained that the NYCWP teacher-consultant had introduced her to new strategies—activities such as read-alouds, shared readings, and minilessons to help her students understand scientific terms. She concluded that the NYCWP teacher-consultant had helped her to focus on improving student performance by concentrating on the main aspects of what she wanted her students to know. The sample writing assignment Aurora provided involved the production of a detailed research proposal. The assignment required her students to engage in prewriting (e.g., listing and organizing). It also required drafting and revising. Her responses to the teacher survey administered at the end of spring 2005 indicated that she taught all the elements of

the process of writing—prewriting, drafting, sharing with peers, revising, and editing—“sometimes.” Twenty-two percent of her students said they revised and edited their writing daily. These data support Aurora’s interview responses in relation to introducing more writing into her classroom.

Overall, the data indicate that Aurora, with the support of the NYCWP teacher-consultant, made a conscious effort to introduce more writing into her science classes. Because the consultations were on-site and scheduled on a regular basis, Aurora’s specific needs were addressed and the teacher-consultant’s ideas translated into her classroom.

**Peter - program group history teacher.** During his initial interview, Peter noted that he had had a range of professional development experiences, not just with the NYCWP. In his words, “what was missing from the other experiences was the focus on why we write and the bigger ideas.” He noted that NYCWP seminars gave him lots of tools to use in the classroom. In particular, he now used journals more often. In his words, “I can see students use writing for understanding, which is a very big [writing project] thing. . . . I’ve seen it work with kids, and I do it all the time in the classroom.”

During his follow-up interview, Peter noted that the NYCWP teacher-consultant introduced him to using “low-stakes” writing, which he now used in the classroom along with a variety of prewriting techniques such as summarizing, writing letters to historical characters, and analyzing photographs. He reported that contact with the NYCWP teacher-consultant enabled him to reflect on a regular basis upon what he intended to do in the classroom.

The sample writing assignment Peter provided along with corresponding samples of his students’ work demonstrates that he provided charts for planning students’ essays. They include evidence of drafting, his feedback, redrafting, and final presentation. Peter’s responses to the survey administered at the end of the spring 2005 semester indicated that he “sometimes” employed all the elements of the process of writing: prewriting, drafting, sharing with peers, revising, and editing. In their survey responses, half of Peter’s students said they edited and revised their writing daily.

Peter refined his approach to teaching history, and used writing consistently and appropriately in his classes. He used all the elements of the writing process, including prewriting, revising and editing. The data suggest that for this experienced teacher, the sustained contact with the NYCWP enabled him to become increasingly reflective about his teaching practice and ways to improve it.

## **Student Outcomes**

### ***Analysis of NYCWP student writing samples***

The on-demand writing assessments of program and comparison group students were compared and analyzed. In particular, differences between groups in the change in scores from baseline sample to follow-up sample were measured on a holistic assessment and on six specific individual attributes: ideas, organization, voice, sentence fluency, word

choice, and conventions. Table 4 shows the results for the students (42 program and 39 comparison) who took the on-demand writing test at the beginning and end of the spring semester. The results are also depicted in figures 1–7 in appendix 9.

**Table 4**  
**Differences Between Program and Comparison Groups for Students Who Took the**  
**Writing Tests at the Beginning and End of the Spring 2005 Semester**

Trait	Program Group (n = 42)			Comparison Group (n = 39)			Comp. Change	
	Mean at Baseline	Mean at Follow-up	Mean Change	Mean at Baseline	Mean at Follow-up	Mean Change	<i>F(df)</i>	<i>p</i>
<b>Ideas</b>	2.3	2.8	0.5	2.3	2.0	-0.3	6.0(1,79)	0.01*
<b>Organization</b>	2.1	2.5	0.4	2.3	2.0	-0.3	5.3(1,79)	0.01*
<b>Voice</b>	2.6	3.4	0.8	3.0	2.6	-0.4	20.3(1,79)	<.01*
<b>Sentence Fluency</b>	2.5	2.8	0.3	2.3	2.3	0.0	1.2(1,79)	0.27
<b>Word Choice</b>	2.6	2.8	0.2	2.6	2.2	-0.4	5.8(1,79)	0.01*
<b>Conventions</b>	2.5	2.9	0.4	2.4	2.2	-0.2	6.2(1,79)	0.01*
<b>Holistic</b>	2.1	2.7	0.6	2.1	2.0	-0.1	6.8(1,79)	0.01*

*Note:* \* indicates a statistically significant difference in mean score change from baseline to follow-up between the two groups.

Repeated measures ANOVA showed statistically significant improvements in the program group students' scores from pre- to posttest on five of the six measured traits (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, and conventions), as well as on the holistic assessment. In all these areas, the scores of the program group students increased across writing-prompt administrations, whereas scores of the comparison group either decreased or stayed the same.

***Student writing samples and ELL***

Eighteen of the 39 students in the comparison group were English language learners. ELL students made up 46% of the comparison group and 38% of the program group. It is possible that comparison group students tended to do worse on the writing-prompt assessments because this group contained relatively more ELL students. To check for this possibility, the scores of ELL students in both groups were directly compared. Results are shown in table 5.

**Table 5**  
**Differences Between Program and Comparison Groups in Change in Scores on the Writing Tests**  
**Administered over the Spring 2005 Semester for ELL Only**

Trait	Program Group (n = 16)			Comparison Group (n = 18)			Comp. Change	
	Mean at Baseline	Mean at Follow-up	Mean Change	Mean at Baseline	Mean at Follow-up	Mean Change	<i>F</i> ( <i>df</i> )	<i>p</i>
<b>Ideas</b>	2.3	2.8	0.5	1.9	1.4	-0.5	4.6(1,32)	0.04*
<b>Organization</b>	2.1	2.8	0.7	2.1	1.4	-0.7	9.1(1,32)	0.01*
<b>Voice</b>	2.7	3.4	0.7	3.1	2.3	-0.8	10.6(1,32)	0.01*
<b>Sentence Fluency</b>	2.0	2.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.80(1,32)	0.37
<b>Word Choice</b>	2.4	2.6	0.2	1.9	1.5	-0.4	1.6(1,32)	0.21
<b>Conventions</b>	2.0	2.8	0.8	1.6	1.5	-0.1	4.3(1,32)	0.04*
<b>Holistic</b>	2.0	2.7	0.7	1.6	1.4	-0.2	4.8(1,32)	0.04*

*Note:* \* indicates a statistically significant difference in mean score change from baseline to follow-up between the two groups.

Repeated measures ANOVA demonstrated that ELL students in the program group also made statistically significant gains in score compared with the comparison group on four of the six writing traits (ideas, organization, voice, and conventions), as well as on the holistic assessment. Although the differences between groups were not statistically significant in the areas of sentence fluency or word choice, program group scores increased between prompt administrations on both these traits, whereas comparison group scores either decreased or stayed the same.

That is, when ELL students were directly compared across groups, the program group still tended to show higher gains than the comparison group between pre- and posttest administrations. Thus, it is unlikely that the program group outperformed the comparison group simply because the comparison group contained relatively more ELL students.

### ***Writing assessment results for non-ELL students***

The above findings were further confirmed when writing assessment scores for non-ELL students were compared across the groups. Scores of non-ELL students from the program group increased across prompt administrations while scores for comparison group students either decreased or stayed the same for all traits with the exception of word choice. (For word choice the scores of the program group stayed about the same, while scores of the comparison group declined between writing prompt administrations.) However, repeated measures ANOVA demonstrated that the only statistically significant differences between the two groups' score changes were in the areas of voice and word choice.

### ***Student writing assessments and student grade level***

Of the 42 students in the program group who took the writing-prompt assessment, 10 (24%) were either juniors or seniors. By contrast, 25 (64%) of comparison group students were either juniors or seniors. Five students (13%) from the comparison group did not indicate their level. A nonparametric test (Pearson's chi-square) showed that the comparison group contained significantly more juniors and seniors than the program group. Thus any significant increases in the program group scores on the writing assessments relative to the comparison group could not have been due to the group containing a greater number of students at a more advanced level than the comparison group.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study sought to document the effect of the NYCWP on teachers' growth, teachers' practices, and students' writing. Implications of our findings in each of these areas are discussed below.

### **Does the NYCWP Support Teachers' Growth?**

Results from the interviews with program group teachers generally showed that their interactions with teacher-consultants led to their developing a variety of specific strategies to meet unique literacy needs across content areas. In addition, program group teachers said they had developed a greater appreciation of the value of writing,

particularly as a means of developing students' reflective thinking and conceptual understanding. These findings must be treated with some caution, however, as the interviews were conducted either by NYCWP teacher-consultants or by the independent evaluator. The interviewees may have associated the independent evaluator with the NYCWP, even though he was not directly connected with the organization. If this were the case, then the teachers may have overemphasized their positive perceptions of the NYCWP.

It was also the case that the comparison group teachers had introduced into their classrooms some strategies that were similar to those promulgated by the NYCWP, but on a more limited basis. In addition, their introduction of these approaches to writing did not seem to be a result of any professional development that they had received. Owing to the small size of the comparison group, it is impossible to say to what extent the experiences and practices of these teachers represent all teachers who have not been exposed to the NYCWP. Moreover, because all three comparison teachers taught in very similar content areas (ELL, English, and language arts), it is not possible to draw any inferences about the extent and manner of use of writing by non-NYCWP teachers in other content areas.

### **How Does the NYCWP Affect Teacher Practice?**

The case-study data indicate that program group teachers tend to see writing as a process and that they applied the elements of that process (prewriting, drafting, revision, peer response, and editing) in a systematic way. Program teachers—particularly those with ELL students—introduced more freewriting into their classrooms, with beneficial effects. Program group teachers also introduced peer responding into their classrooms, particularly student read-alouds and student sharing of work in groups. The case studies show that for these teachers, the NYCWP fostered the increased use of writing, and of writing as a process, across content areas such as history and science.

Once again, it is impossible to comment on how writing is viewed or used by other content-area teachers who have not had any exposure to the NYCWP. However, it does seem from the case-study data that while comparison group teachers did employ some elements of the writing process, they tended to see them as disparate techniques and not part of a greater whole. They also tended not to view writing as a way to develop students' conceptual understanding.

### **How Does the NYCWP Affect Student Writing?**

For most literacy traits measured by the writing assessments, program group students' scores tended to increase from initial to follow-up administrations, whereas comparison group students' scores tended either to decline or stay the same. The differences between the two groups' score changes over time were statistically significant for all traits except sentence fluency.

It is also interesting that the scores of the history and science teachers' students tended to increase across prompt administrations. This suggests that the introduction of writing

across the curriculum might have had a positive effect on the writing assessment scores for these students.

Furthermore, the statistically significant improvement in the scores of program group students relative to comparison group students was not influenced by teachers' experience, students' grade level, or the fact that there were relatively fewer English language learners in the program group. However, while it is possible to rule out certain confounding factors such as ELL status or teacher experience to account for the writing assessment results, it is not possible at this time to establish a causal link between the NYCWP's programs and positive student outcomes. Nevertheless, the results of this study suggest that by addressing the needs of individual teachers, respecting teachers' assessments of students' learning needs, and encouraging teachers to view writing as a coherent process that can be used across content areas and genres, scores on more formal essay-style writing tasks can be significantly improved.

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## Appendix 1

### 2004–05 School Characteristics

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	Comparison
Total Enrollment	214	450	3,491	3,203	299	502	2,051
# ELL Students	187	63	548	373	272	78	325
Total # Staff	15	30	263	210	19	41	146
Total # Teachers	12	25	205	164	14	32	107
Type of HS	Small	Small	Large	Large	Small	Small	Large
# Yrs of NYCWP Work in School	3	5	2.5	5	1	5	2*
Free Lunch	87%	81%	64%	81%	95%	85%	62%
Race/Ethnicity							
Afr-Amer	28%	36%	34%	56%	9%	32%	35%
Hispanic	64%	62%	48%	40%	88%	66%	60%
White	3%	1%	10%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Other	5%	1%	8%	3%	2%	0%	2%
ELL Students	87%	14%	16%	12%	91%	16%	16%
Tchrs > 5 yrs exp	8%	28%	48%	57%	57%	42%	59%
Passed RE**	n/a***	36%	65%	49%	24%	27%	38%

\* The New York City Writing Project worked in the Comparison school between 2000 and 2001.

\*\*Class of 2004 achievement data on Regents examination in English after four years (NYC Department of Education 2003–04 Annual School Reports). 65 or above is passing.

\*\*\* Data are not available because this school is not fully enrolled yet.

## Appendix 2

### Teacher Characteristics by Group

	<b>Program Group</b>	<b>Comparison Group</b>
Female	17	3
Male	6	0
< 5 yrs teaching	11	0
> 5 yrs teaching	5	3
<i>Subject Areas</i>		
Math/Sci	3	0
Lang Arts	9	1
Social Studies/ History	2	0
ESL	4	2
English	4	0
Special Ed	1	0
<i>Grade Levels Taught</i>		
9 <sup>th</sup>	5	0
11 <sup>th</sup>	2	0
12 <sup>th</sup>	1	2
9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup>	7	1
10 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup>	1	0
9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup>	7	0

**Appendix 3a**  
**New York City Writing Project**  
**2004–05 Student On-demand Writing Prompt A**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Please read the assignment below. You will have 30 minutes to write and complete this assignment. Be sure to plan carefully how you will use this 30 minutes. Please use the space below and on the back of this page to plan for, draft and revise what you intend to write.

You must write this assignment on the sheet of paper provided (you may use both sides). Please write your name on the sheet of paper provided. Please pay attention to the focus and organization of your writing as well as how you express yourself. Be sure to include sufficient detail and check your punctuation, spelling, and grammar before you finish.

=====

**ASSIGNMENT**

A committee is putting together a collection of objects that represent what life is like in America today. Think of one object that should be included in this collection. Write a letter to convince the members of the committee that the object you have chosen represents America today. Be sure to support your choice with convincing reasons and to explain your reasons in detail.

**Appendix 3b**  
**New York City Writing Project**  
**2004–05 Student On-demand Writing Prompt B**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Please read the assignment below. You will have 30 minutes to write and complete this assignment. Be sure to plan carefully how you will use this 30 minutes. Please use the space below and on the back of this page to plan for, draft and revise what you intend to write.

You must write this assignment on the sheet of paper provided (you may use both sides). Please write your name on the sheet of paper provided. Please pay attention to the focus and organization of your writing as well as how you express yourself. Be sure to include sufficient detail and check your punctuation, spelling, and grammar before you finish.

=====

**ASSIGNMENT**

Teens today experience many different negative pressures. Pressures may also be positive. Write about pressure(s) that you or someone you know has felt. You may wish to consider such influences as peers, teachers, parents, the community, and/or the media.

**Appendix 4**  
**2004-2005 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 Research Initiative to complete. The survey will be used to collect information about the 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 individual teachers or schools. Please help us by taking a few minutes to complete this survey. At the end of the coming year, we will ask you to complete another survey. We are asking that you print your name on both surveys so that we may compare your answers on this survey to those that you provide on the second survey. All responses to the survey are confidential and will be kept by an independent researcher in locked file cabinets. No individual names will be reported.

We value your feedback. Your insights and understanding will help us refine and extend our inservice program for high school teachers. We appreciate your assistance and thank you for your important contributions to urban education.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND**

Ethnicity (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Undergraduate Degree (check all that apply):

\_\_\_ Education, (specify area) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Other, (specify area) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ None

2. Graduate Degree (check all that apply):

\_\_\_ Education, (specify area) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Other, (specify area) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ None

3. How long have you been teaching? (check **one**)

- less than 1 year     1-3 years     4-6 years  
 7-10 years     11-20 years     more than 20 years

4. How long have you been teaching at **this** school?

Number of years: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What grades do you teach? (check **all that apply**)

- 9<sup>th</sup>     10<sup>th</sup>     11<sup>th</sup>     12<sup>th</sup>

6. What subject areas do you teach? (check **all that apply**)

- Arts     Math     Science     Language Arts  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which aspects of the NYCWP inservice program have you **ever** participated in?  
(check **all that apply**)

- Work with on-site teacher-consultant  
 Fall after-school graduate seminars **only**  
 Spring after-school graduate seminar **only**  
 **Both** fall and spring after-school graduate seminars  
 None

8. If you have previously participated in a NYCWP seminar, **how many** have you attended?

Number of seminars attended = \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE GO TO SECTION B – NEXT PAGE)**

**SECTION B: TEACHING AND USE OF WRITING**

9. For a typical class period, for what percentage of the time would you use writing as a teaching activity (this **does not** include copying notes from the blackboard)? (check **one**)

\_\_\_ 0-10%    \_\_\_ 11-20%    \_\_\_ 21-30%    \_\_\_ 31-40%    \_\_\_ 41-50%

\_\_\_ 51-60%    \_\_\_ 61-70%    \_\_\_ 71-80%    \_\_\_ 81-90%    \_\_\_ 91-100%

10. What percentage of the time **during the past year** have your students engaged in the following kinds of writing? (circle an appropriate number for each kind of writing)

<b>Kind of Writing</b>	<b>0-10%</b>	<b>11-25%</b>	<b>26-50%</b>	<b>51-75%</b>	<b>76-90%</b>	<b>91-100%</b>
Responding to homework questions	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Reports/Research papers	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Essays of various kinds	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Point of view writing	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Dialogues, monologues, plays	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Personal narratives/memoirs	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Freewriting	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Poetry	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Stories	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Summary	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Editorial	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Letters	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Interviews	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Personal Journals	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Writers' Notebooks	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

**(PLEASE CONTINUE SECTION B – NEXT PAGE)**

(SECTION B – CONTINUED)

11. **During the past year** how often did you use writing in the following ways?  
(circle an appropriate number for each use of writing)

<b>Use of Writing</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
To introduce a lesson or unit	1	2	3	4	5	6
To summarize a lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6
To reflect on what was learned	1	2	3	4	5	6
To analyze information and concepts	1	2	3	4	5	6
To prepare for or reflect on class discussion	1	2	3	4	5	6
To assert opinions	1	2	3	4	5	6
To respond to oral presentations	1	2	3	4	5	6
To respond to other student writing	1	2	3	4	5	6
To prepare for a test	1	2	3	4	5	6

12. **During the past year** how often did you engage in the following aspects of the  
writing process? (circle an appropriate number for each writing process)

<b>Writing Process</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
Prewriting	1	2	3	4	5	6
Drafting	1	2	3	4	5	6
Peer responding	1	2	3	4	5	6
Revision	1	2	3	4	5	6
Editing	1	2	3	4	5	6
Publishing student work	1	2	3	4	5	6
Displaying student work	1	2	3	4	5	6

(PLEASE CONTINUE SECTION B – NEXT PAGE)

(SECTION B – CONTINUED)

13. When students are developing a **major writing assignment**, to what extent do you use the following methods of support? (circle an appropriate number for each support method)

<b>Support Method</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
Discuss the assignment in class	1	2	3	4	5	6
Provide choice within the assignment	1	2	3	4	5	6
Allow the students to work on the assignment over time	1	2	3	4	5	6
Give opportunities for writing in class	1	2	3	4	5	6
Conference with individual students	1	2	3	4	5	6
Provide opportunities for revision	1	2	3	4	5	6
Use examples of finished products as models	1	2	3	4	5	6
Discuss and analyze models	1	2	3	4	5	6
Give opportunities for feedback on drafts from peers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Provide instruction on how to respond to drafts	1	2	3	4	5	6
Allot time for editing and proofreading drafts	1	2	3	4	5	6

(PLEASE CONTINUE SECTION B – NEXT PAGE)

(SECTION B – CONTINUED)

14. How often during the past year have you used the following **strategies** to accomplish each of the **reading purposes** listed at the top of the following table?

Please use the following scale:

**Never = 1 Hardly Ever = 2 Sometimes = 3 Very Often = 4 Always = 5**

And **circle one** response for each square in the table below

Strategy	Reading Purpose					
	Analyzing information and concepts	Annotating text in various ways	Selecting and responding to quotations	Introducing reading materials	Making assertions based on text information	Responding to documents, graphs, films, etc.
Reading logs/journals	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Double entry notes	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Big newsprint (Text on Text)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Point of view	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Dialogue with authors	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Letters to authors	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Focused free writes	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Interactive read alouds	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Generating questions	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Instant summaries	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

**SECTION C: RESPONDING TO WRITING**

15. When you respond to student writing, how often do you use the following strategies both for **drafts** and **final pieces**? (circle an appropriate number for each strategy)

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly Ever</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>	<b>Always</b>
Write comments in the margins or end ( <b>Drafts</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Write comments in the margins or end ( <b>Final Pieces</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Offer students specific written suggestions for revision ( <b>Drafts</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Offer students specific written suggestions for revision ( <b>Final Pieces</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Provide comments and a grade ( <b>Drafts</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Provide comments and a grade ( <b>Final Pieces</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Write comments on post-it notes ( <b>Drafts</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Write comments on post-it notes ( <b>Final Pieces</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Use editing symbols and abbreviations ( <b>Drafts</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Use editing symbols and abbreviations ( <b>Final Pieces</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Put comments on a response form ( <b>Drafts</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Put comments on a response form ( <b>Final Pieces</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Conference with individual students ( <b>Drafts</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Conference with individual students ( <b>Final Pieces</b> )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

**(PLEASE CONTINUE SECTION C – NEXT PAGE)**

(SECTION C – CONTINUED)

16. When you address error in student writing, how often do you use the following strategies both for **informal (low stakes)** and **formal (high stakes)** writing? (circle an appropriate number for each strategy)

Strategy	Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
Identify every error (Low Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identify every error (High Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identify and correct every error (Low Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Identify and correct every error (High Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Do minilessons on common errors (Low Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Do minilessons on common errors (High Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Conference with individual students (Low Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Conference with individual students (High Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Use sample student papers (Low Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Use sample student papers (High Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teach grammar and/or use a grammar book (Low Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Teach grammar and/or use a grammar book (High Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Use a student checklist (Low Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Use a student checklist (High Stakes)	1	2	3	4	5	6

(PLEASE GO TO SECTION D – NEXT PAGE)

**SECTION D:**

17. How confident do you feel about **using writing** in your subject area? (Circle a number on the scale below)

Subject area: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Not at all Confident</b>					<b>Extremely Confident</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY!**

**Appendix 5**  
**Individual Teacher Interview Protocol**  
New York City Writing Project  
Local Research Initiative

Date:

Interviewer:

Teacher's Name:

Teacher's School:

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### **Teacher Background**

1. **Could you briefly describe your background and teaching experience?**
  - a. **How long have you been teaching?**
  - b. **How long have you been teaching at this school?**
  - c. **What subject areas do you teach?**
  - d. **What grade level(s) do you teach?**

### **Professional Development Experience**

1. **What kind of professional development have you had with regard to writing?**
2. **How valuable has it been to you?**
  - a. **Which components have you found the most valuable?**
  - b. **Why was that?**
  - c. **Which components have you found the least valuable?**
  - d. **Why was that?**
3. **How has your practice of teaching writing changed as a result of the professional development?**
  - a. **What would you say you do more as a result of the professional development?**
  - b. **What would you say you do less as a result of your professional development?**
4. **In what ways has professional development influenced your goals in teaching writing?**
5. **How has professional development influenced your teaching strategies?**
6. **How has professional development affected your perception of your students?**

Appendix 5 (continued)

7. **In what ways has your participation in professional development had an impact on your students' skills and achievement?**
8. **How has professional development influenced your relationship with your colleagues?**
9. **In what ways has professional development had an impact on your own writing?**
10. **What are your current goals for teaching writing to your students?**
  - a. **How do you set these goals?**
  - b. **How will you know if your students are meeting these goals or not?**

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ANSWER MY QUESTIONS.**

## Appendix 6

### 2004–05 Student Writing Questionnaire

Dear Student,

The following is a voluntary survey that we are asking all students of teachers who are participating in the New York City Writing Project’s Local Research Initiative to complete. This survey will be used to collect information about the 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. We are asking that you print your name on both surveys so that we may compare your answers on this survey to those that you provide on the second 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 in any way influence your grades.

Your feedback will help us improve our services. We appreciate your assistance and thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Fresh, Soph, Jr., Sr, (Please indicate): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 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	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. Other kids in my class think I’m a good writer	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. There are people in my family who think I’m a good writer	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. My teacher thinks I’m a good writer.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. Writing is a way to express myself.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. Writing is something I do for a grade.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. Writing is sometimes frustrating	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Appendix 6 (continued)

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. This is how I feel about writing.	I really like it	I like it	I don't like it	I can't stand it

**This is how often I experience difference aspects of writing at school:**

13. I write about topics I choose.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
14. I discuss my writing with my classmates.	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!**

**Appendix 7**  
NYCWP – Analytic Taxonomy

**WRITING AS PROCESS**

- Prewriting
- Drafting / redrafting / revising
- Collaboration /public process /sharing [in process]/publishing
- Peer Response
- Teacher Response
  - Ideas/Content/Development
  - Organization
  - Word Choice
  - Sentence fluency
  - Voice
  - Conventions
  - Assessment of Student Writing
- Editing

**INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING/DESIGN**

- Time on writing / amount of writing
- Scaffolding
- Depth of Study
- Choice
- Sharing
- Modeling
- Support for external high-stake assessments
- Safety: Appropriate environment / appropriate ‘stakes’
- Expectations

**INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS**

- Mind-maps
- Journaling
- Double entry notes
- Big newsprint (text-on-text)
- Freewriting
- Interactive read alouds
- Generating questions
- Instant summaries
- Point of view

## **APPENDIX 7 (CONTINUED)**

### **DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS WRITING AND WRITERS**

- Enjoyment of / engagement in writing
- Appreciation of the writer's challenge
- Sense of self as a writer

### **Miscellaneous Codes**

- Urban conditions/contexts/system conditions
- Contrarian views
- Teacher collaboration

### **NEW YORK CITY WRITING PROJECT PARTICIPATION ASSERTED YES/NO**

### **PARTICIPATION IN WRITING RELATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Participation asserted (Yes/No)
- Dispositions towards NYCWP writing related professional development +ve/-ve
- Dispositions towards non-NYCWP writing related professional development  
+ve/-ve
- Influence of NYCWP asserted

### **IMPACT OF PD ON TEACHERS ASSERTED**

### **IMPACT OF PD ON STUDENTS ASSERTED**

## Appendix 8

### Inter-rater Reliabilities by Trait and by Grade Level

Level	Total N of Papers	Number of Papers Double Scored (Rate)	Overall (Across All Scores) % agree	Sentence							Word
				Holistic % agree	Ideas % agree	Organization % agree	Voice % agree	Fluency % agree	Choice % agree	Conventions % agree	
Elementary	1188	136 (11%)	89%	95%	90%	90%	88%	87%	88%	88%	
Middle School	2379	1231 (52%)	93%	96%	92%	92%	91%	92%	94%	92%	
High School	3938	381 (10%)	89%	94%	90%	89%	86%	87%	92%	86%	
Total - all levels	7505	1748 (23%)	92%	95%	92%	91%	90%	91%	93%	91%	

All scores were double entered independently and the files compared. The resolution of all discrepancies produced a highly accurate data file that was provided to the sites for use in the analyses offered here.

### Appendix 9

Change in writing-prompt scores for those students who took the prompts at the beginning and end of one semester.

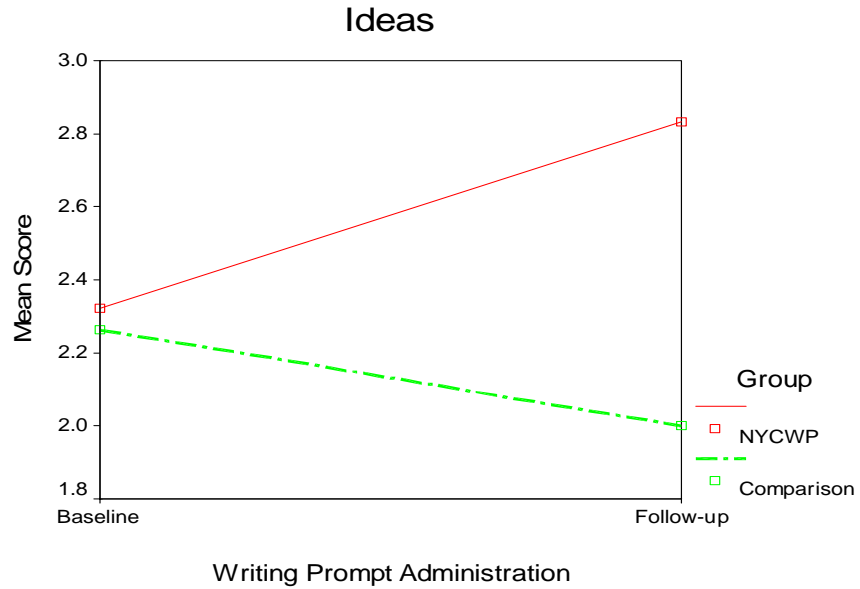


Figure 1. Change in mean score for 'Ideas' by group for students with only one semester between prompt administrations.

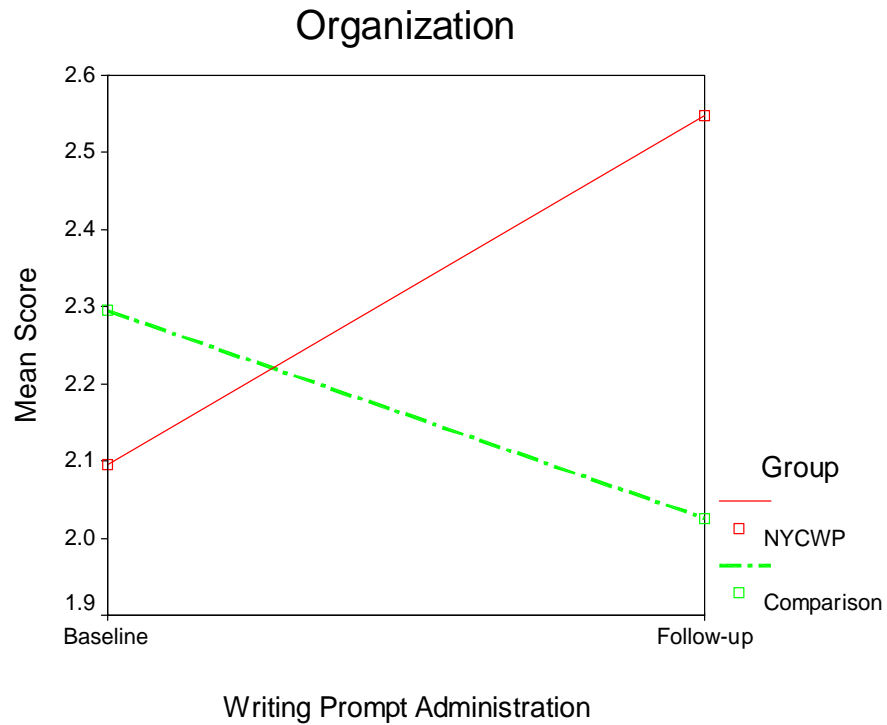


Figure 2. Change in mean score for 'Organization' by group for students with only one semester between prompt administrations.

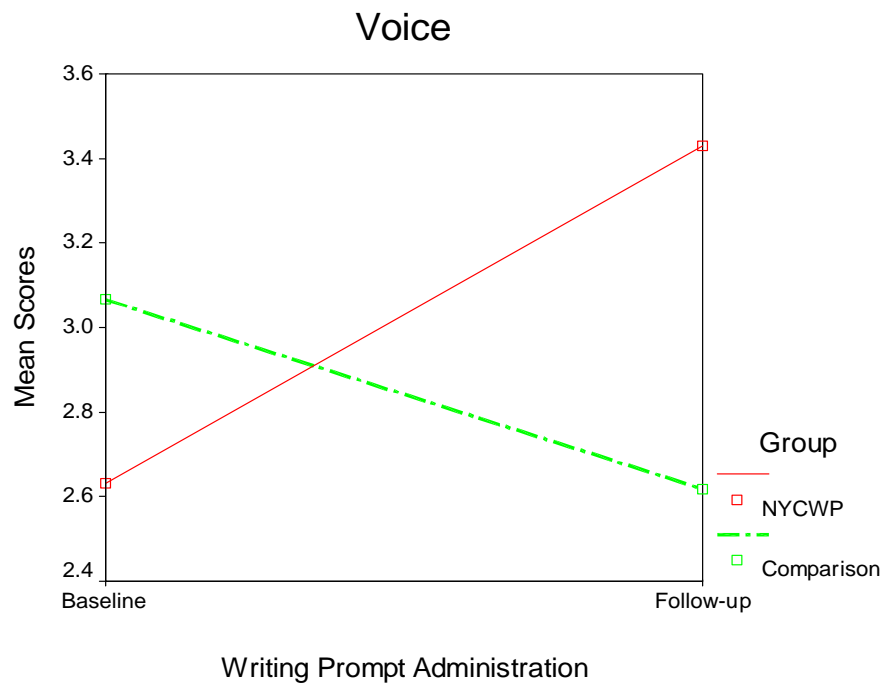


Figure 3. Change in mean score for 'Voice' by group for students with only one semester between prompt administrations.

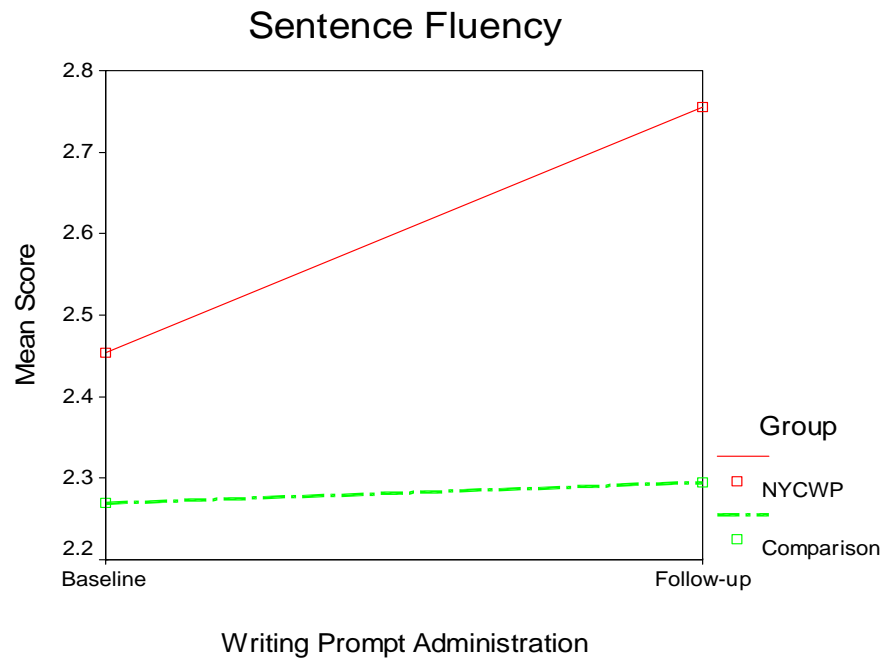
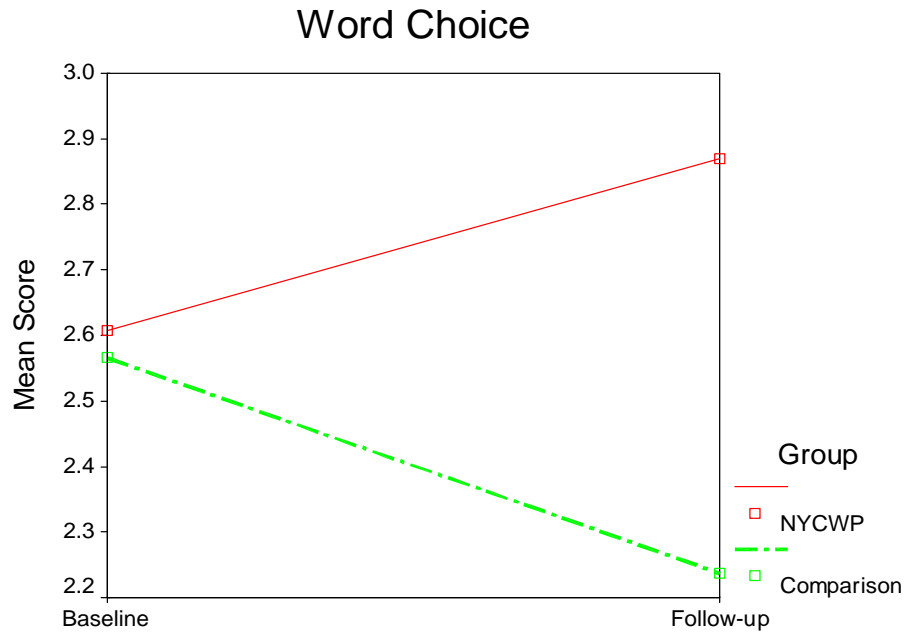
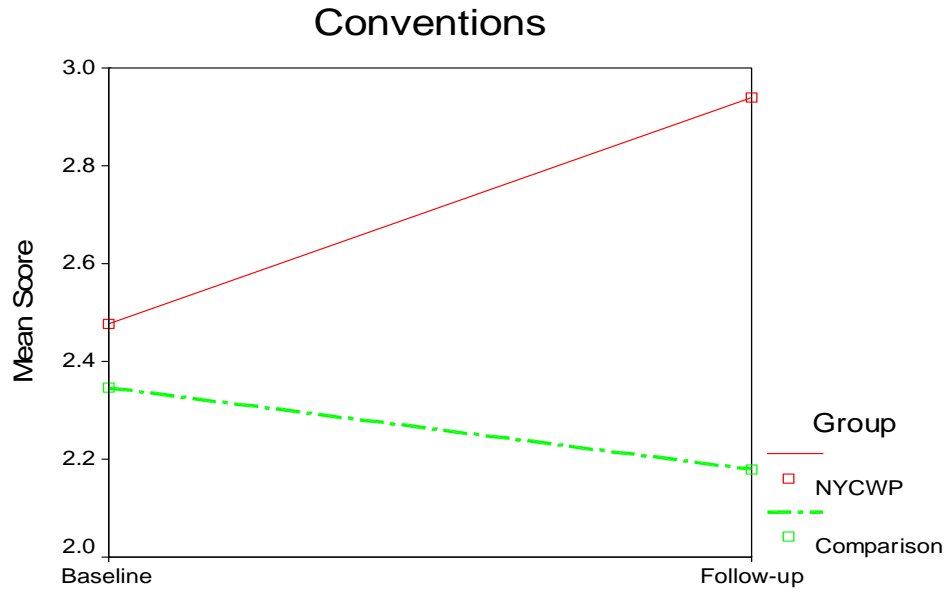


Figure 4. Change in mean score for 'Sentence Fluency' by group for students with only one semester between prompt administrations.



#### Writing Prompt Administration

Figure 5. Change in mean score for 'Word Choice' by group for students with only one semester between prompt administrations.



#### Writing Prompt Administration

Figure 6. Change in mean score for 'Conventions' by group for students with only one semester between prompt administrations.

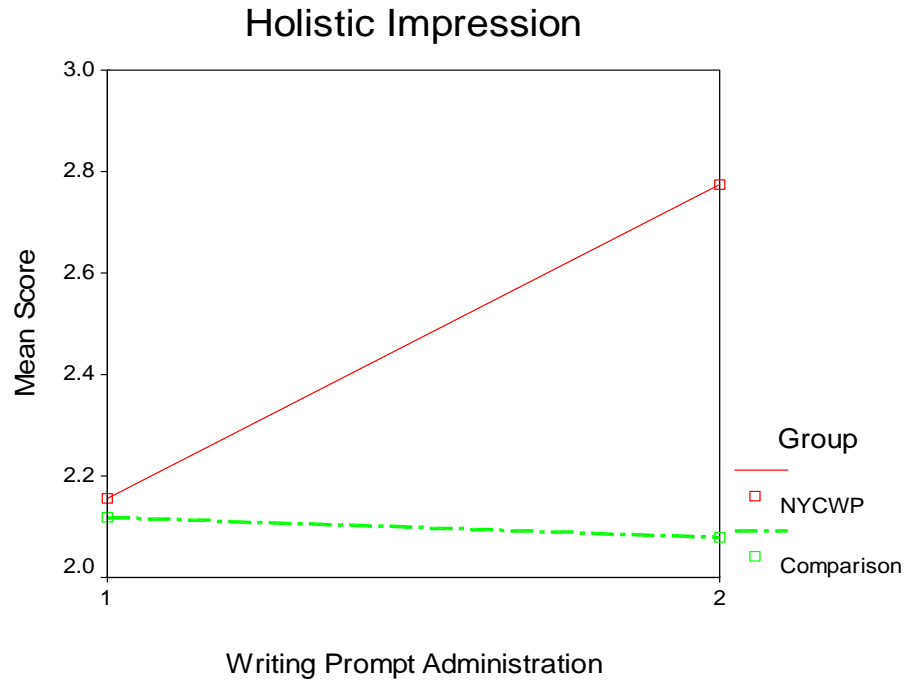


Figure 7. Change in mean score for 'Holistic Impression' by group for students with only one semester between prompt administrations.